Mr. GRAY.

THE

POEMS

OF

MR. GRAY.

TO WHICH ARE PREFIXED

MEMOIRS

OF HIS

LIFE AND WRITINGS.

BY

W. MASON, M. A.

VOL. I.

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MEMOIRS

MEMOIRS

OF THE

LIFE AND WRITINGS

OF

MR. GRAY.

SECTION THE FIRST.

THE lives of men of letters ſeldom abound with incidents; and perhaps no life ever afforded fewer than that which I have undertaken to write. But I am far from mentioning this by way of previous apology, as is the trite cuſtom of biographers. The reſpect which I owe to my deceaſed friend, to the publick, (and let me add) to myſelf, prompts me to wave ſo impertinent a ceremonial. A reader of ſenſe and taſte never expects to find in the memoirs of a Philoſopher, or a Poet, the ſame ſpecies of entertainment, or information, which he would receive from thoſe of a Stateſman or General: He expects, however, to be either informed or entertained: Nor would he be diſappointed, did the writer take care to dwell principally on ſuch topicks as characterize the

man, and diſtinguiſh that peculiar part which he acted in the varied Drama of Society. But this rule, ſelf-evidently right as it may ſeem, is ſeldom obſerved. It was ſaid with almoſt as much truth as wit, of one of theſe writers, that when he compoſed the life of Lord Verulam, he forgot that he was a Philoſopher; and therefore, it was to be feared, ſhould he finiſh that of the Duke of Marlborough, he would forget that he was a General. I ſhall avoid a like fault. I will promiſe my reader that he ſhall, in the following pages, ſeldom behold Mr. Gray in any other light than that of a Scholar and a Poet: And though I am more ſolicitous to ſhow that he was a virtuous, a friendly, and an amiable man, than either; yet this ſolicitude becomes unneceſſary from the very papers which he has bequeathed me, and which I here arrange for the purpoſe: Since in theſe the qualities of his head and heart ſo conſtantly appear together, and the fertility of his fancy ſo intimately unites with the ſympathetic tenderneſs of his ſoul, that were it in my intention, I ſhould find it impoſſible to disjoin them.

His parents were reputable citizens of London. His grandfather a conſiderable merchant: But his father, Mr. Philip Gray, though he alſo followed buſineſs, was of an indolent and reſerved temper; and therefore rather diminiſhed than increaſed his paternal fortune. He had

had many children, of whom Thomas, the ſubject of theſe memoirs, was the fifth born. All of them, except him, died in their infancy; and I have been told that he narrowly eſcaped ſuffocation, (owing to too great a fulneſs of blood, which deſtroyed the reſt) and would certainly have been cut off as early, had not his mother, with a courage remarkable for one of her ſex, and withal ſo very tender a parent, ventured to open a vein with her own hand, which inſtantly removed the paroxyſm.

He was born in Cornhill, December the 26th, 1716; was educated at Eton ſchool, under the care of Mr. Antrobus, his mother's brother, who was at that time one of the aſſiſtant maſters. From thence he removed to St. Peter's college, Cambridge, where he was admitted a penſioner in the year 1734. While at ſchool he contracted a friendſhip with Mr. Horace Walpole and Mr. Richard Weſt: The former of theſe appears, at preſent, with too much diſtinction in the literary, as well as faſhionable, world, to make it neceſſary I ſhould enlarge on this ſubject: But as the latter died before he could exert his uncommon abilities, it ſeems neceſſary to premiſe ſomewhat concerning him; eſpecially as almoſt every anecdote which I have to produce, concerning the juvenile part of Mr. Gray's life, is included in his correſpondence with this gentleman. A correſpondence

which continued, with very little interruption, for the ſpace of about eight years, from the time of their leaving ſchool to the death of the accompliſhed youth in queſtion.

His father was Lord Chancellor of Ireland. His grandfather, by the mother, the famous Biſhop Burnet. He removed from Eton to Oxford, about the ſame time that Mr. Gray left that place for Cambridge. Each of them carried with him the reputation of an excellent claſſick ſcholar; though I have been told that, at the time, Mr. Weſt's genius was reckoned the more brilliant of the two: A judgment which, I conceive, was not well founded; for though Mr. Weſt's part of that correſpondence, which I ſhall ſpeedily give the reader *, will undoubtedly ſhow that he poſſeſſed very extraordinary

* I am well aware that I am here going to do a thing which the cautious and courtly Dr. Sprat (were he now alive) would highly cenſure. He had, it ſeems, a large collection of his friend's, Mr. Cowley's, letters, "a way of writing in which he "peculiarly excelled, as in theſe he always expreſſed the native "tenderneſs and innocent gaiety of his heart; yet the Doc-"tor was of opinion that nothing of this nature ſhould be "publiſhed, and that the letters that paſs between particular "friends (if they are written as they ought to be) can ſcarce "ever be fit to ſee the light." What! not when they expreſs the native tenderneſs and innocent gaiety of a heart like Mr. Cowley's? No, by no means, "for in ſuch letters the ſouls "of men appear undreſſed, and in that negligent habit they "may be fit to be ſeen by one or two in a chamber, but not "to go abroad in the ſtreet." *See Life of Cowley, page* 38, *Hurd's edition.*

Such readers as believe it incumbent on every well-bred ſoul never to appear but in full dreſs, will think that Dr. Sprat has

traordinary talents, yet, on Mr. Gray's ſide, there ſeems, ſuperadded to theſe, ſuch a manly preciſion of taſte, and maturity of judgment, as would induce one to believe Mr. Walpole's phraſe not very hyperbolical, who has often aſſerted to me that, "Gray never was a Boy."

In April, 1738, Mr. Weſt left Chriſt Church for the Inner Temple, and Mr. Gray removed from Peter-Houſe to town the latter end of that year; intending alſo to apply himſelf to the ſtudy of the law in the ſame ſociety: For which purpoſe his father had already either hired or bought him a ſet of chambers. But on an invitation which Mr. Walpole gave him to be his companion in his travels, this intention was laid aſide for the preſent, and never after put in execution.

According to the plan which I have formed for arranging theſe papers, a part of the letters which I have already mentioned will here find their proper place. They will give a much clearer idea both of Mr. Gray and his friend, at this early period, than any narrative of mine. They will include alſo ſeveral ſpecimens of their

has reaſon on his ſide; but I ſuſpect that the generality will, notwithſtanding, wiſh he had been leſs ſcrupulouſly delicate, and lament that the letters in queſtion are not now extant. Of one thing I am fully confident, that, had this been the caſe, the judicious Dr. Hurd would have found his critical labour much leſſened, when, in pure charity to this amiable writer, he lately employed himſelf in ſeparating

His pleaſing moral from his pointed wit.

juvenile compoſitions, and, at the ſame time, mark the progreſs they had made in literature. They will aſcertain, not only the ſcope and turn of their genius, but of their temper. In a word, Mr. Gray will become his own biographer, both in this and the reſt of the ſections into which I divide this work. By which means, and by the aſſiſtance of a few notes which I ſhall occaſionally add, it may be hoped that nothing will be omitted which may tend to give a regular and clear delineation of his life and character.

But as this is the earlieſt part of their correſpondence, and includes only the time which paſſed between Mr. Gray's admiſſion into the univerſity and his going abroad, it may be reaſonably expected that the manner rather than the matter of theſe letters muſt conſtitute their principal merit: they will therefore be chiefly acceptable to ſuch ingenuous youths, who, being about the ſame age, have a reliſh for the ſame ſtudies, and boſoms ſuſceptible of the ſame warmth of friendſhip. To theſe I addreſs them; in the pleaſing hope that they may prompt them to emulate their elegant ſimplicity, and, of courſe, to ſtudy with more care the claſſick models from which it was derived. If they do this, I ſhall not be much concerned if graver readers think them unimportant or even trifling.

LET-

LETTER I.

Mr. WEST to Mr. GRAY.

YOU uſe me very cruelly: You have ſent me but one letter ſince I have been at Oxford, and that too agreeable not to make me ſenſible how great my loſs is in not having more. Next to ſeeing you is the pleaſure of ſeeing your hand-writing; next to hearing you is the pleaſure of hearing from you. Really and ſincerely I wonder at you, that you thought it not worth while to anſwer my laſt letter. I hope this will have better ſucceſs in behalf of your quondam ſchool-fellow; in behalf of one who has walked hand in hand with you, like the two children in the wood,

Through many a flowery path and ſhelly grot,
Where learning lull'd us in her private * maze.

The very thought, you ſee, tips my pen with poetry, and brings Eton to my view. Conſider me very ſeriouſly here in a ſtrange country, inhabited by things that call themſelves Doctors and Maſters of Arts; a country flowing with ſyllogiſms and ale, where Horace and Virgil are equally unknown; conſider me, I ſay, in this melancholy light, and then think if ſomething be not due to Your's.

Chriſt Church, Nov. 14, 1735.

* This expreſſion prettily diſtinguiſhes their ſtudies when out of the publick ſchool, which would naturally, at their age, be vague and deſultory.

P. S. I desire you will send me soon, and truly and positively, a history † of your own time.

† Alluding to his grandfather's history.

LETTER II.

Mr. GRAY to Mr. WEST.

PERMIT me again to write to you, tho' I have so long neglected my duty, and forgive my brevity, when I tell you it is occasioned wholly by the hurry I am in to get to a place where I expect to meet with no other pleasure than the sight of you; for I am preparing for London in a few days at furtheſt. I do not wonder in the leaſt at your frequent blaming my indolence, it ought rather to be called ingratitude, and I am obliged to your goodneſs for ſoftening ſo harſh an appellation. When we meet it will, however, be my greateſt of pleaſures to know what you do, what you read, and how you ſpend your time, &c. &c. and to tell you what I do not read, and how I do not, &c. for almoſt all the employment of my hours may be beſt explained by negatives; take my word and experience upon it, doing nothing is a moſt amuſing buſineſs; and yet neither ſomething nor nothing gives me any pleaſure. When you have ſeen one of my days, you have ſeen a whole

whole year of my life; they go round and round like the blind horſe in the mill, only he has the ſatisfaction of fancying he makes a progreſs, and gets ſome ground; my eyes are open enough to ſee the ſame dull proſpect, and to know that having made four-and-twenty ſteps more, I ſhall be juſt where I was; I may, better than moſt people, ſay my life is but a ſpan, were I not afraid leſt you ſhould not believe that a perſon ſo ſhort-lived could write even ſo long a letter as this; in ſhort, I believe I muſt not ſend you the hiſtory of my own time, till I can alſo ſend you that of the reformation *. However, as the moſt undeſerving people in the world muſt ſure have the vanity to wiſh ſomebody had a regard for them, ſo I need not wonder at my own in being pleaſed that you care about me. You need not doubt, therefore, of having a firſt row in the front box of my little heart, and I believe you are not in danger of being crouded there; it is aſking you to an old play indeed, but you will be candid enough to excuſe the whole piece for the ſake of a few tolerable lines.

For this little while paſt I have been playing with Statius; we yeſterday had a game at quoits together; you will eaſily forgive me for having broke his head, as you have a little pique

* Carrying on the alluſion to the other hiſtory written by Mr. Weſt's grandfather.

to him. I ſend you my tranſlation *, which I did not engage in becauſe I liked that part of the Poem, nor do I now ſend it to you becauſe I think it deſerves it, but merely to ſhow you how I miſpend my days.

Third in the labours of the Diſk came on,
With ſturdy ſtep and ſlow, Hippomedon;
Artful and ſtrong he pois'd the well-known weight,
By Phlegyas warn'd, and fir'd by Mneſtheus' fate,
That to avoid, and this to emulate.
His vig'rous arm he try'd before he flung,
Brac'd all his nerves, and every ſinew ſtrung;
Then with a tempeſt's whirl and wary eye,
Purſu'd his caſt, and hurl'd the orb on high;
The orb on high tenacious of its courſe,
True to the mighty arm that gave it force,
Far overleaps all bound, and joys to ſee
Its ancient lord ſecure of victory.
The theatre's green height and woody wall
Tremble ere it precipitates its fall,
The pond'rous maſs ſinks in the cleaving ground,
While vales and woods and echoing hills rebound,

* This conſiſted of about 110 lines, which were ſent ſeparately, and as I believe it was Mr. Gray's firſt attempt in Engliſh verſe, it is a curioſity not to be entirely with-held from the reader; therefore, although it is not my intention to fill theſe memoirs with much either of his or his correſpondent's productions in this way, yet as a few lines will ſhow how much Mr. Gray had imbibed of Dryden's ſpirited manner, at this early period, I inſert at the end of the letter a ſpecimen of the whole.

As

As when from Ætna's ſmoking ſummit broke,
The eyeleſs Cyclops heav'd the craggy rock;
Where Ocean frets beneath the daſhing oar;
And parting ſurges round the veſſel roar;
'Twas there he aim'd the meditated harm,
And ſcarce Ulyſſes 'ſcap'd his giant arm.
A tyger's pride the victor bore away,
With native ſpots and artful labour gay,
A ſhining border round the margin roll'd,
And calm'd the terrors of his claws in gold.

Cambridge, May 8, 1736.

LETTER III.

Mr. WEST to Mr. GRAY.

I Agree with you that you have broke Statius's head, but it is in like manner as Apollo broke Hyacinth's, you have ſoiled him at his own weapon; I muſt inſiſt on ſeeing the reſt of your tranſlation, and then I will examine it entire, and compare it with the Latin, and be very wiſe and ſevere, and put on an inflexible face, ſuch as becomes the character of a true ſon of Ariſtarchus, of hyper-critical memory. In the mean while,

And calm'd the terrors of his claws in gold,

is exactly Statius, — *Summos auro manſuevere at ungues*. I never knew before that the golden fangs on hammercloths were ſo old a faſhion.

Your

Your hymenêal * I was told was the beſt in the Cambridge Collection before I ſaw it, and indeed, it is no great compliment to tell you I thought it ſo when I had ſeen it, but ſincerely it pleaſed me beſt. Methinks the college bards have run into a ſtrange taſte on this occaſion. Such ſoft unmeaning ſtuff about Venus and Cupid, and Peleus and Thetis, and Zephyrs and Dryads, was never read. As for my poor little Eclogue it has been condemned and beheaded by our Weſtminſter judges; an exordium of about ſixteen lines abſolutely cut off, and its other limbs quartered in a moſt barbarous manner. I will ſend it you in my next as my true and lawful heir, in excluſion of the pretender, who has the impudence to appear under my name.

As yet I have not looked into Sir Iſaac. Publick diſputations I hate; mathematicks I reverence; hiſtory, morality, and natural philoſophy, have the greateſt charms in my eye; but who can forget poetry? they call it idleneſs, but it is ſurely the moſt enchanting thing in the world, "ac dulce otium & pœne omni negotio pulchrius."

I am, dear Sir, your's while I am,

Chriſt Church, May 24, 1736. R. W.

The

* Publiſhed in the Cambridge collection of verſes on the Prince of Wales's marriage. I have not thought it neceſſary to

⁂ ⁂ ⁂ ⁂ ⁂

The following letter ſeems to require ſome little preface, not ſo much becauſe it expreſſes Mr. Gray's juvenile ſentiments concerning the mode of our academical education, as that theſe ſentiments prevailed with him through life, and that he often declared them, with ſo little reſerve, as to create him many enemies. It is certain that at the time when he was admitted, and for ſome years after, Jacobitiſm, and its concomitant, hard drinking, prevailed ſtill at Cambridge, much to the prejudice not only of good manners but of good letters; for if this ſpirit was then on the decline, it was not extinguiſhed till after the year 1745. But we ſee (as was natural enough in a young man) he laid the blame rather on the mode of education than the mode of the times; and to this error the uncommon proficiency he had made at Eton, in claſſical learning, might contribute, as he found himſelf in a ſituation where that ſpecies of merit held not the firſt rank. However this be, it was neceſſary not to omit this feature of his mind, when employed in drawing a general likeneſs of it, and what colours could be found

to inſert theſe hexameters, as adulatory verſes of this kind, however well written, deſerve not to be tranſmitted to poſterity; and, indeed, are uſually buried, as they ought to be, in the traſh with which they are ſurrounded. Every perſon, who feels himſelf a poet, ought to be above proſtituting his powers on ſuch occaſions, and extreme youth (as was the caſe with Mr. Gray) is the only thing that can apologize for having done it.

ſo

ſo forcible as his own, to expreſs its true light and ſhadow? I would further obſerve, that whatever truth there might be in his ſatire at the time it was written, it can by no means affect the preſent ſtate of the univerſity. There is uſually a much greater fluctuation of taſte and manners in an academical, than a national body; occaſioned (to uſe a ſcholaſtick metaphor) by that very quick ſucceſſion of its component parts, which often goes near to deſtroy its perſonal identity. Whatever therefore may be true of ſuch a ſociety, at one time, may be, and generally is, ten years after abſolutely falſe.

LETTER IV.

Mr. GRAY to Mr. WEST.

YOU muſt know that I do not take degrees, and, after this term, ſhall have nothing more of college impertinencies to undergo, which I truſt will be ſome pleaſure to you, as it is a great one to me. I have endured lectures daily and hourly ſince I came laſt, ſupported by the hopes of being ſhortly at full liberty to give myſelf up to my friends and claſſical companions, whom, poor ſouls! though I ſee them fallen into great contempt with moſt people here, yet I cannot avoid joining with, and out of a ſpirit of obſtinacy (I think) love them the

the better for it; and indeed, what can I do elſe? Muſt I plunge into metaphyſicks? Alas, I cannot ſee in the dark; nature has not furniſhed me with the opticks of a cat. Muſt I pore upon mathematicks? Alas, I cannot ſee in too much light; I am no eagle. It is very poſſible that two and two makes four, but I would not give four farthings to demonſtrate this ever ſo clearly; and if theſe be the profits of life, give me the amuſements of it. The people I behold all around me, it ſeems, know all this and more, and yet I do not know one of them who inſpires me with any ambition of being like him. Surely it was of this place, now Cambridge, but formerly known by the name of Babylon, that the prophet ſpoke when he ſaid, "the wild "beaſts of the deſart ſhall dwell there, and their "houſes ſhall be full of doleful creatures, "and owls ſhall build there, and ſatyrs ſhall "dance there; their forts and towers ſhall "be a den for ever, a joy of wild aſſes; "there ſhall the great owl make her neſt, and "lay and hatch and gather under her ſhadow; "it ſhall be a court of dragons; the ſcreech owl "alſo ſhall reſt there, and find for herſelf a "place of reſt." You ſee here is a pretty collection of deſolate animals, which is verified in this town to a tittle, and perhaps it may alſo allude to your habitation, for you know all types may be taken by abundance of handles: however, I defy your owls to match mine.

If

If the default of your ſpirits and nerves be nothing but the effect of the hyp, I have no more to ſay. We all muſt ſubmit to that wayward Queen, I too, in no ſmall degree, own her ſway,

I feel her influence while I ſpeak her power. But if it be a real diſtemper, pray take more care of your health, if not for your own, at leaſt, for our ſakes, and do not be ſo ſoon weary of this little world: I do not know what * refined friendſhips you may have contracted in the other, but pray do not be in a hurry to ſee your acquaintance above; among your terreſtrial familiars, however, though I ſay it that ſhould not ſay it, there poſitively is not one that has a greater eſteem for you than

Yours moſt ſincerely, &c.

Peterhouſe, Dec. 1736.

LETTER V.

Mr. WEST to Mr. GRAY.

I Congratulate you on your being about to leave college,† and rejoice much you carry no degrees with you. For I would not have had

* This thought is very juvenile; but perhaps he meant to ridicule the affected manner of Mrs. Rowe's letters of the dead to the living; a book which was, I believe, publiſhed about this time.

† I ſuſpect that Mr. Weſt miſtook his correſpondent; who, in ſaying he did not take degrees, meant only to let his friend know that he ſhould ſoon be releaſed from lectures and diſ-

had you dignified, and I not, for the world, you would have inſulted me ſo. My eyes, ſuch as they are, like yours, are neither metaphyſical nor mathematical; I have, nevertheleſs, a great reſpect for your connoiſſeurs that way, but am always contented to be their humble admirer. Your collection of deſolate animals pleaſed me much; but Oxford, I can aſſure you, has her owls that match yours, and the prophecy has certainly a ſquint that way. Well, you are leaving this diſmal land of bondage, and which way are you turning your face? Your friends, indeed, may be happy in you, but what will you do with your claſſick companions? An inn of our court is as horrid a place as a college, and a moot caſe is as dear to gentle dulneſs as a ſyllogiſm. But where-ever you go, let me beg you not to throw poetry "like a naufeous weed away:" Cheriſh its ſweets in your boſom, they will ſerve you now and then to correct the diſguſting ſober follies of the common law, *miſce ſtultitiam conſiliis brevem, dulce eſt deſipere in loco*; ſo ſaid Horace to Virgil, thoſe two ſons of Anac in poetry, and ſo ſay I to you, in this degenerate land of pigmies.

Mix with your grave deſigns a little pleaſure,
Each day of buſineſs has its hour of leiſure.

diſputations. It is certain that Mr. Gray continued at college near two years after the time he wrote the preceding letter.

In

In one of theſe hours I hope, dear ſir, you will ſometimes think of me, write to me, and know me yours,

Ἐξαύδα, μὴ κεῦθε νόῳ, ἵνα εἴδομεν ἄμφω

that is, write freely to me and openly, as I do to you, and to give you a proof of it, I have ſent you an elegy * of Tibullus tranſlated. Tibullus, you muſt know, is my favourite elegiack poet; for his language is more elegant and his thoughts more natural than Ovid's. Ovid excels him only in wit, of which no poet had more in my opinion. The reaſon I chooſe ſo melancholy a kind of poeſy is, becauſe my low ſpirits and conſtant ill health (things in me not imaginary, as you ſurmiſe, but too real, alas! and, I fear, conſtitutional) "have tuned my heart to elegies of wo;" and this likewiſe is the reaſon why I am the moſt irregular thing alive at college, for you may depend upon it I value my health above what they call diſcipline. As for this poor unlicked thing of an elegy, pray criticiſe it unmercifully, for I ſend it with that intent. Indeed your late tranſlation of Statius might have deterred me, but I know you are not more able to excel others, than you

* This I omit for the reaſon given in a preceding note, and for another alſo, becauſe it is not written in alternate, but heroick rhyme; which I think is not the ſpecies of Engliſh meaſure adapted to elegiack poetry.

are

are apt to forgive the want of excellence, eſpecially when it is found in the productions of

Your moſt ſincere friend.

Chriſt Church, Dec. 22, 1736.

LETTER VI.*

Mr. GRAY to Mr. WALPOLE.

YOU can never weary me with the repetition of any thing that makes me ſenſible of your kindneſs; ſince that has been the only idea of any ſocial happineſs I have almoſt ever received, and which (begging your pardon for thinking ſo differently from you in ſuch caſes) I would by no means have parted with for an exemption from all the uneaſineſſes mixed with it: But it would be unjuſt to imagine my taſte was any rule for yours; for which reaſon my

* Mr. Walpole, on my informing him that it was my intention to publiſh the principal part of Mr. Gray's correſpondence with Mr. Weſt, very obligingly communicated to me the letters which he had alſo received from Mr. Gray at the ſame period. From this collection I have ſelected ſuch as I thought would be moſt likely to pleaſe the generality of readers; omitting, though with regret, many of the more ſprightly and humourous ſort, becauſe either from their perſonality, or ſome other local circumſtance, they did not ſeem ſo well adapted to hit the public taſte. I ſhall ſay more upon this ſubject in a ſubſequent ſection, when I give my idea of Mr. Gray's peculiar vein of humour.

letters

letters are ſhorter and leſs frequent than they would be, had I any materials but myſelf to entertain you with. Love and brown ſugar muſt be a poor regale for one of your goût, and, alas! you know I am by trade a grocer.† Scandal (if I had any) is a merchandize you do not profeſs dealing in; now and then, indeed, and to oblige a friend, you may perhaps ſlip a little out of your pocket, as a decayed gentlewoman would a piece of right mecklin, or a little quantity of run tea, but this only now and then, not to make a practice of it. Monſters appertaining to this climate you have ſeen already, both wet and dry. So you perceive within how narrow bounds my pen is circumſcribed, and the whole contents of my ſhare in our correſpondence, may be reduced under the two heads of the 1ſt, You, 2dly, I; the firſt is, indeed, a ſubject to expatiate upon, but you might laugh at me for talking about what I do not underſtand; the ſecond is ſo tiny, ſo tireſome, that you ſhall hear no more of it than that it is ever.

Yours,

Peterhouſe, Dec. 23, 1736.

† i. e. A man who deals only in coarſe and ordinary wares, to theſe he compares the plain ſincerity of his own friendſhip, undiſguiſed by flattery; which, had he choſen to carry on the alluſion, he might have termed the trade of a Confectioner.

LET-

LETTER VII.

Mr. WEST to Mr. GRAY.

I Have been very ill, and am ſtill hardly recovered. Do you remember Elegy 5th, Book the 3d, of Tibullus, *Vos tenet*, &c. and do you remember a letter of Mr. Pope's, in ſickneſs, to Mr. Steele? This melancholy elegy and this melancholy letter I turned into a more melancholy epiſtle of my own, during my ſickneſs, in the way of imitation; and this I ſend to you, and my friends at Cambridge, not to divert them, for it cannot, but merely to ſhow them how ſincere I was when ſick: I hope my ſending it to them now may convince them I am no leſs ſincere, though perhaps more ſimple, when well.

AD AMICOS.*

Yes, happy youths, on Camus' ſedgy ſide,
You feel each joy that friendſhip can divide;
Each realm of ſcience and of art explore,
And with the ancient blend the modern lore.
Studious alone to learn whate'er may tend
To raiſe the genius or the heart to mend,
Now pleas'd along the cloyſter'd walk you rove,
And trace the verdant mazes of the grove,

* Almoſt all Tibullus's elegy is imitated in this little piece, from whence his tranſition to Mr. Pope's letter is very artfully contrived, and beſpeaks a degree of judgment much beyond Mr. Weſt's years.

Where

Where ſocial oft, and oft alone, you chooſe
To catch the zephyr and to court the muſe.
Mean time at me (while all devoid of art
Theſe lines give back the image of my heart)
At me the pow'r that comes or ſoon or late,
Or aims, or ſeems to aim, the dart of fate;
From you remote, methinks, alone I ſtand
Like ſome ſad exile in a deſert land;
Around no friends their lenient care to join
In mutual warmth, and mix their heart with mine.
Or real pains, or thoſe which fancy raiſe,
For ever blot the ſunſhine of my days;
To ſickneſs ſtill, and ſtill to grief a prey,
Health turns from me her roſy face away.
Juſt heav'n! what ſin, ere life begins to bloom,
Devotes my head untimely to the tomb;
Did e'er this hand againſt a brother's life
Drug the dire bowl or point the murd'rous knife?
Did e'er this tongue the ſlanderer's tale proclaim,
Or madly violate my Maker's name?
Did e'er this heart betray a friend or foe,
Or know a thought but all the world might know?
As yet juſt ſtarted from the liſts of time,
My growing years have ſcarcely told their prime;

Uſeleſs,

Uſeleſs, as yet, through life I've idly run,
No pleaſures taſted, and few duties done.
*Ah, who, ere autumn's mellowing ſuns appear,
Would pluck the promiſe of the vernal year;
Or, ere the grapes their purple hue betray,
Tear the crude cluſter from the mourning ſpray?
Stern power of Fate, whoſe ebon ſceptre rules
The Stygian deſerts and Cimmerian pools,
Forbear, nor raſhly ſmite my youthful heart,
A victim yet unworthy of thy dart;
Ah, ſtay till age ſhall blaſt my withering face,
Shake in my head, and falter in my pace;
Then aim the ſhaft, then meditate the blow,
† And to the dead my willing ſhade ſhall go.
How weak is Man to Reaſon's judging eye!
Born in this moment, in the next we die;
Part mortal clay, and part ethereal fire,
Too proud to creep, too humble to aſpire.
In vain our plans of happineſs we raiſe,
Pain is our lot, and patience is our praiſe;
Wealth, lineage, honours, conqueſt, or a throne,
Are what the wiſe would fear to call their own.
Health is at beſt a vain precarious thing,
And fair-fac'd youth is ever on the wing;

* Quid fraudare juvat vitem creſcentibus uvis?
Et modo nata mala vellere poma manu?
So the original. The paraphraſe ſeems to be infinitely more beautiful. There is a peculiar blemiſh in the ſecond line, ariſing from the ſynonimes *mala* and *poma*.

† Here he quits Tibullus; the ten following verſes have but a remote reference to Mr. Pope's letter.

* 'Tis

* 'Tis like the ſtream, aſide whoſe wat'ry bed
Some blooming plant exalts his flow'ry head,
Nurs'd by the wave the ſpreading branches riſe,
Shade all the ground and flouriſh to the ſkies;
The waves the while beneath in ſecret flow,
And undermine the hollow bank below;
Wide and more wide the waters urge their way,
Bare all the roots and on the fibres prey.
Too late the plant bewails his fooliſh pride,
And ſinks, untimely, in the whelming tide.
But why repine! does life deſerve my ſigh?
Few will lament my loſs whene'er I die.
† For thoſe the wretches I deſpiſe or hate,
I neither envy nor regard their fate. [ſpread
For me, whene'er all conquering death ſhall
His wings around my unrepining head,
‡ I care not; though this face be ſeen no more,
The world will paſs as cheerful as before,

* "Youth, at the very beſt, is but the betrayer of human "life in a gentler and ſmoother manner than age; 'tis like "the ſtream that nouriſhes a plant upon a bank, and cauſes "it to flouriſh and bloſſom to the ſight, but at the ſame time "is undermining it at the root in ſecret." *Pope's Works, vol. 7, page 254, 1ſt edit. Warburton.*—Mr. Weſt, by prolonging his paraphraſe of this ſimile, gives it additional beauty from that very circumſtance, but he ought to have introduced it by Mr. Pope's own thought, "Youth is a betrayer;" his couplet preceding the ſimile conveys too general a reflection.

† "I am not at all uneaſy at the thought that many men, "whom I never had any eſteem for, are likely to enjoy this "world after me." *Vide Ibid.*

‡ "The morning after my exit the ſun will riſe as bright "as ever, the flowers ſmell as ſweet, the plants ſpring as green, ſo far Mr Weſt copies his original, but inſtead of the following part of the ſentence "people will laugh as "heartily, and marry as faſt as they uſed to do," he inſerts a more ſolemn idea.

Bright

Bright as before the day-ſtar will appear,
The fields as verdant, and the ſkies as clear:
Nor ſtorms nor comets will my doom declare,
Nor ſigns on earth, nor portents in the air;
Unknown and ſilent will depart my breath,
Nor Nature e'er take notice of my death.
Yet ſome there are (ere ſpent my vital days)
Within whoſe breaſts my tomb I wiſh to raiſe.
Lov'd in my life, lamented in my end,
Their praiſe would crown me as their precepts mend;
To them may theſe fond lines my name endear,
Not from the Poet but the Friend ſincere,
Chriſt Church, July 4, 1737.

LETTER VIII.

Mr. GRAY to Mr. WEST.

AFTER a month's expectation of you, and a fortnight's deſpair, at Cambridge, I am come to town, and to better hopes of ſeeing you. If what you ſent me laſt be the product of your melancholy, what may I not expect

Nor ſtorms nor comets, &c.
juſtly perceiving that the elegiack turn of his epiſtle would not admit ſo ludicrous a thought, as was in its place in Mr. Pope's familiar letter; ſo that we ſee, young as he was, he had obtained the art of judiciouſly ſelecting, one of the firſt provinces of good taſte.

from your more cheerful hours? For by this time the ill health that you complain of is (I hope) quite departed; though, if I were ſelf-intereſted, I ought to wiſh for the continuance of any thing that could be the occaſion of ſo much pleaſure to me. Low ſpirits are my true and faithful companions; they get up with me, go to bed with me, make journeys and returns as I do; nay, and pay viſits, and will even affect to be jocoſe, and force a feeble laugh with me; but moſt commonly we ſit alone together, and are the prettieſt inſipid company in the world. However, when you come, I believe they muſt undergo the fate of all humble companions, and be diſcarded. Would I could turn them to the ſame uſe that you have done, and make an Apollo of them. If they could write ſuch verſes with me, not hartſhorn, nor ſpirit of amber, nor all that furniſhes the cloſet of an apothecary's widow, ſhould perſuade me to part with them: But, while I write to you, I hear the bad news of Lady Walpole's death on Saturday night laſt. Forgive me if the thought of what my poor Horace muſt feel on that account obliges me to have done in reminding you that I am

Yours, &c.

London, Aug. 22, 1737.

LET-

LETTER IX.

Mr. GRAY to Mr. WALPOLE.

I Was hindered in my laſt, and ſo could not give you all the trouble I would have done. The deſcription of a road, which your coach wheels have ſo often honoured, it would be needleſs to give you; ſuffice it, that I arrived ſafe * at my Uncle's, who is a great hunter in imagination; his dogs take up every chair in the houſe, ſo I am forced to ſtand at this preſent writing; and though the gout forbids him galloping after them in the field, yet he continues ſtill to regale his ears and noſe with their comfortable noiſe and ſtink. He holds me mighty cheap, I perceive, for walking when I ſhould ride, and reading when I ſhould hunt. My comfort amidſt all this is, that I have at the diſtance of half a mile, through a green lane, a foreſt (the vulgar call it a common) all my own, at leaſt as good as ſo, for I ſpy no human thing in it but myſelf. It is a little chaos of mountains and precipices; mountains, it is true, that do not aſcend much above the clouds, nor are the declivities quite ſo amazing as Dover cliff; but juſt ſuch hills as people, who love their necks as I do, may venture to climb, and craggs that give the eye as much pleaſure, as if they were more dangerous: Both vale and hill are covered with moſt venerable beeches, and

* At Burnham in Buckinghamſhire.

other very reverend vegetables, that, like moſt other ancient people, are always dreaming out their old ſtories to the winds,

And as they bow, their hoary tops relate,
In murm'ring ſounds, the dark decrees of fate;
While viſions, as poetick eyes avow,
Cling to each leaf and ſwarm on every bough.

At the foot of one of theſe ſquats me I, *(Il penſeroſo)* and there grow to the trunk for a whole morning. The timorous hare and ſportive ſquirrel gambol around me like Adam in Paradiſe, before he had an Eve; but I think he did not uſe to read Virgil, as I commonly did there. In this ſituation, I often converſe with my Horace, aloud too, that is talk to you, but I do not remember, that I ever heard you anſwer me. I beg pardon for taking all the converſation to myſelf, but it is entirely your own fault. We have old Mr. Southern at a Gentleman's houſe a little way off, who often comes to ſee us; he is now ſeventy-ſeven years old, * and has almoſt wholly loſt his memory; but is as agreeable as an old man can be, at leaſt I perſuade myſelf ſo when I look at him, and think of Iſabella and Oroonoko. I ſhall be in Town in about three weeks. Adieu.

September, 1737.

* He lived nine years longer, and died at the age of eighty ſix. Mr. Gray always thought highly of his pathetick powers, at the ſame time that he blamed his ill taſte for mixing them ſo injudiciouſly with farce, in order to produce that monſtrous ſpecies of compoſition called Tragi-comedy.

LET-

LETTER X.

Mr. GRAY to Mr. WALPOLE. †

I Sympathize with you in the ſufferings which you foreſee are coming upon you. We are both at preſent, I imagine, in no very agreeable ſituation; for my part I am, under the misfortune of having nothing to do, but it is a misfortune, which, thank my ſtars, I can pretty well bear. You are in a confuſion of wine, and roaring, and hunting, and tobacco, and, heaven be praiſed, you too can pretty well bear it; while our evils are no more, I believe we ſhall not much repine. I imagine, however, you will rather chooſe to converſe with the living dead, that adorn the walls of your apartments, than with the dead living, that deck the middles of them; and prefer a picture of ſtill life, to the realities of a noiſy one, and, as I gueſs, will imitate what you prefer, and for an hour or two at noon will ſtick yourſelf up as formal as if you had been fixed in your frame for theſe hundred years, with a pink or roſe in one hand, and a great ſeal ring on the other. Your name, I aſſure you, has been propagated in theſe countries by a convert of yours, one **, he has brought over his whole family to you; they were before pretty good Whigs, but now they

† At this time with his father at Houghton. Mr. Gray writes from the ſame place he did before, from his Uncle's houſe in Buckinghamſhire.

are abſolute Walpolians. We have hardly any body in the pariſh but knows exactly the dimenſions of the hall and ſaloon at Houghton, and begin to believe that the lanthorn * is not ſo great a conſumer of the fat of the land, as diſaffected perſons have ſaid: For your reputation, we keep to ourſelves your not hunting nor drinking hogan, either of which, here, would be ſufficient to lay your honour in the duſt. To-morrow ſe'nnight I hope to be in town, and not long after at Cambridge.

Burnham, Sept. 1737. I am, &c.

LETTER XI.

Mr. WEST to Mr. GRAY.

RECEIVING no anſwer to my laſt letter, which I writ above a month ago, I muſt own I am a little uneaſy. The ſlight ſhadow of you which I had in town has only ſerved to endear you to me the more. The moments I paſſed with you made a ſtrong impreſſion upon me. I fingled you out for a friend, and I would have you know me to be yours, if you deem me worthy. — Alas, Gray, you cannot imagine how miſerable my time paſſes away. My health and nerves and ſpirits are, thank my ſtars, the very worſt, I think, in Oxford.

* A favourite object of Tory ſatire at that time.

Four-

Four-and-twenty hours of pure unalloy'd health together are as unknown to me as the 400,000 characters in the Chineſe vocabulary. One of my complaints has of late been ſo over-civil as to viſit me regularly once a month — *jam certus conviva.* This is a painful nervous head-ach, which, perhaps, you have ſometimes heard me ſpeak of before. Give me leave to ſay, I find no phyſick comparable to your letters. If, as it is ſaid in *Eccleſiaſticus*, "Friendſhip be the phyſick of the mind," preſcribe to me, dear Gray, as often and as much as you think proper, I ſhall be a moſt obedient patient.

Non ego
Fidis iraſcar medicis, offendar amicis.

I venture here to write you down a Greek epigram *, which I lately turned into Latin, and hope you will excuſe it.

Perſpicui puerum ludentem in margine rivi
Immerſit vitreæ limpidus error aquæ:
At gelido ut mater moribundum e flumine traxit
Credula, & amplexu funus inane fovet;
Paulatim puer in dilecto pectore, ſomno
Languidus, æternum lumina compoſuit.

* Of Poſidippus. *Vide Anthologia, H. Stephan. p.* 220. Mr. Gray in his MS. notes to this edition of the Anthologia (of which I ſhall give an account in a ſubſequent ſection) inſerts this tranſlation, and adds "Deſcriptio pulcherrima & quæ tenuem illum Græcorum ſpiritum mirifice ſapit;" and in concluſion, "Poſidippus inter principes Anthologiæ poetas "emicat, Ptolemæi Philadelphi ſæculo vixit."

 Adieu!

Adieu! I am going to my tutor's lectures on one Puffendorff, a very juriſprudent author as you ſhall read on a Summer's day.

Believe me yours, &c.

Chriſt Church, Dec. 2, 1738.

LETTER XII.

Mr. GRAY to Mr. WEST.

LITERAS, mi Favonî *! abs te demum nudiuſtertiùs, credo, accepi planè mellitas, niſi fortè quâ de ægritudine quâdam tuâ dictum: atque hoc ſane mihi habitum eſt non paulò acerbiùs, quod te capitis morbo implicitum eſſe intellexi; oh morbum mihi quam odioſum! qui de induſtria id agit, ut ego in ſingulos menſes, dii boni, quantis jucunditatibus orbarer! quàm ex animo mihi dolendum eſt, quod

Medio de fonte leporum
Surgit amari aliquid.

Salutem mehercule, nolo, tam parvipendas, atq; amici, tam improbè conſulas: quanquam tute fortaſſis — æſtuas anguſto limite mundi, viamq; (ut dicitur) affectas Olympo, nos tamen non eſſe tam ſublimes, utpote qui hiſce in ſordibus & fæce diutius paululum verſari volumus, reminiſcendum eſt: illæ tuæ Muſæ, ſi te amant

* Mr. Gray in all his Latin compoſitions, addreſſed to this Gentleman, calls him Favonius, in alluſion to the name of Weſt.

modo,

modo, derelinqui pauliſper non nimis ægrè patientur: indulge, amabo te, pluſquam ſoles, corporis exercitationibus: magis te campus habeat, aprico magis te dedas otio, ut ne id ingenium quod tam cultum curas, diligenter nimis dum foves, officioſarum matrum ritu, interimas. Vide quæſo, quam ἰατριχῶς tecum agimus,

ἠδ' ἐπιθήσω
Φάρμακ ἄ κεν πάυσησι μελαίνάων οδυνάων.

ſi de his pharmacis non ſatis liquet; ſunt feſtivitates meræ, ſunt facetiæ & riſus; quos ego equidem ſi adhibere nequeo, tamen ad præcipiendum (ut medicorum fere mos eſt) certè ſatis ſim; id, quod poeticè ſub finem epiſtolæ luſiſti, mihi gratiſſimum quidem accidit; admodum latinè coctum & conditum tetraſticon, Græcam tamen illam ἀφελείαν mirificè ſapit: tu quod reſtat, vide, ſodes, hujuſce homines ignorantiam; cum, unde hoc tibi ſit depromptum, (ut fatear) prorſus neſcio: ſane ego equidem nihil in capſis reperio quo tibi minimæ partis ſolutio fiat. Vale, & me ut ſoles ama.

A. D. 11 Kalend. *Februar.*

LETTER XIII *.

Mr. WEST to Mr. GRAY.

I Ought to anſwer you in Latin, but I feel I dare not enter the liſts with you — *cupidum,*

 pater

* This was written in French, but as I doubted whether it would ſtand the teſt of polite criticiſm ſo well as the preceding would

pater optime, vires deficiunt. Seriouſly, you write in that language with a grace and an Auguſtan urbanity that amazes me: Your Greek too is perfect in its kind. And here let me wonder that a man, *longè Græcorum doctiſſimus*, ſhould be at a loſs for the verſe and chapter whence my epigram is taken. I am ſorry I have not my Aldus with me, that I might ſatisfy your curioſity; but he, with all my other literary folks, are left at Oxford, and therefore you muſt ſtill reſt in ſuſpenſe. I thank you again and again for your medical preſcription. I know very well that thoſe "riſus, feſtivitates, & facetiæ" would contribute greatly to my cure, but then you muſt be my apothecary as well as phyſician, and make up the doſe as well as direct it; ſend me, therefore, an electuary of theſe drugs, made up *ſecundùm artem*, "et eris mihi magnus Apollo," in both his capacities as god of poets and god of phyſicians. Wiſh me joy of leaving my college, and leave yours as faſt as you can. I ſhall be ſettled at the Temple very ſoon.

Dartmouth-ſtreet, Feb. 21, 1737-8.

world of learned, I choſe to tranſlate ſo much of it as I thought neceſſary in order to preſerve the chain of correſpondence.

LET-

LETTER XIV.

Mr. GRAY to Mr. WEST.

*BARBARAS ædes aditure mecum
Quas Eris ſemper fovet inquieta,
Lis ubi latè ſonat, et togatum
Æſtuat agmen!

Dulcius quanto, patulis ſub ulmi
Hoſpitæ ramis temerè jacentem
Sic libris horas, tenuiq; inertes
Fallere Musâ?

Sæpe enim curis vagor expeditâ
Mente; dum, blandam meditans Camœnam,
Vix malo rori, meminive ſeræ
Cedere nocti;

Et pedes quò me rapiunt, in omni
Colle Parnaſſum videor videre
Fertilem ſylvæ, gelidamq; in omni
Fonte Aganippen.

Riſit & Ver me, facileſq; Nymphæ
Nare captantem, nec ineleganti,
Manè quicquid de violis eundo
Surripit aura:

*I chooſe to call this delicate Sapphick Ode the firſt original production of Mr. Gray's muſe; for verſes impoſed either by ſchoolmaſters or tutors ought not, I think, to be taken into conſideration. There is ſeldom a verſe that flows well from the pen of a real Poet if it does not flow voluntarily.

Me

Me reclinatum teneram per herbam ;
Quà leves curſus aqua cunque ducit,
Et moras dulci ſtrepitu lapillo
Nectit in omni.

Hæ novo noſtrum ferè pectus anno
Simplicis curæ tenuere, cœlum
Quamdiù ſudum explicuit Favonî
Purior hora :

Otia et campos nec adhuc relinquo,
Nec magis Phœbo Clytie fidelis ;
(Ingruant venti licet, et ſeneſcat
Mollior æſtas.)

Namque, ſeu, lætos hominum labores
Prataq; & montes recreante curru,
Purpurâ tractus oriens Eoos
Veſtit, et auro ;

Sedulus ſervo veneratus orbem
Prodigium ſplendoris : amœniori
Sive dilectam meditatur igne
Pingere Calpen ;

Uſque dum, fulgore magìs magìs jam
Languido circum, variata nubes
Labitur furtim, viridiſq; in umbras
Scena receſſit.

O ego felix, vice ſi (nec unquam
Surgerem rurſus ſimili cadentem
Parca me lenis ſineret quieto
Fallere Letho !

Multà

Multâ flagranti radiiſq; cincto
Integris ah! quam nihil inviderem,
Cum Dei ardentes medius quadrigas
Sentit Olympus?

Ohe! amicule noſter, et unde, ſodes tu μεσοπάτακτος adeò repente evaſiſti? jam te rogitaturum credo. Neſcio hercle, ſic planè habet. Quicquid enim nugarum ἐπὶ σχολῆς inter ambulandum in palimpſeſto ſcriptitavi, hiſce te maxumè impertiri viſum eſt, quippe quem probare, quod meum eſt, aut certè ignoſcere ſolitum probè novi: bonâ tuâ veniâ ſit ſi fortè videar in fine ſubtriſtior; nam riſui jamjudum ſalutem dixi; etiam paulò mœſtitiæ ſtudioſiorem factum ſcias, promptumque, Καινοῖς παλαιὰ δακρύων γένειν καιά.

O lachrymarum fons, tenero ſacros
Ducentium ortus ex animo: quater
Felix! in imo qui ſcatentem
Pectore te, pia Nympha, ſenſit.

Sed de me ſatis. Cura ut valeas.

Jun. 1738.

LETTER XV.

Mr. WEST to Mr. GRAY.

I Return you a thouſand thanks for your elegant Ode, and wiſh you every joy you wiſh yourſelf in it. But take my word for it, you will

will never ſpend ſo agreeable a day here as you deſcribe; alas! the ſun with us only riſes to ſhew us the way to Weſtminſter-Hall. Nor muſt I forget thanking you for your little Alcaick fragment. The optick Naiads are infinitely obliged to you.

I was laſt week at Richmond Lodge, with Mr. Walpole, for two days, and dined with Cardinal Fleury *; as far as my ſhort ſight can go, the character of his great art and penetration is very juſt, he is indeed

Nulli penetrabilis aſtro.

I go to-morrow to Epſom, where I ſhall be for about a month. Excuſe me, I am in haſte §, but believe me always, &c.

Auguſt 29, 1738.

LETTER XVI.

Mr. GRAY to Mr. WALPOLE.

MY dear Sir, —I ſhould ſay Mr. Inſpector General of the Exports and Imports †; but that appellation would make but an odd

* Sir Robert Walpole.

§ Mr. Weſt ſeems to have been, indeed, in haſte when he writ this letter; elſe, ſurely, his fine taſte would have led him to have been more profuſe in his praiſe of the Alcaic fragment. He might (I think) have ſaid, without paying too extravagant a compliment to Mr. Gray's genius, that no poet of the Auguſtan age ever produced four more perfect lines, or what would ſooner impoſe upon the beſt critick, as being a genuine ancient compoſition.

† Mr. Walpole was juſt named to that poſt, which he exchanged ſoon after for that of Uſher of the Exchequer.

figure

figure in conjunction with the three familiar monoſyllables above written, for

Non benè conveniunt nec in unâ ſede morantur
Majeſtas & amor.

Which is, being interpreted, Love does not live at the Cuſtom-houſe; however, by what ſtyle, title, or denomination ſoever you chooſe to be dignified or diſtinguiſhed hereafter, theſe three words will ſtick by you like a burr, and you can no more get quit of theſe and your chriſtian name than St. Anthony could of his pig. My motions at preſent (which you are pleaſed to aſk after) are much like thoſe of a pendulum, or (* Dr. Longically ſpeaking) oſcillatory. I ſwing from Chapel or Hall home, and from home to Chapel or Hall. All the ſtrange incidents that happen in my journies and returns I ſhall be ſure to acquaint you with; the moſt wonderful is, that it now rains exceedingly, this has refreſhed the proſpect †, as the way for the moſt part lies between green fields, on either hand, terminated with buildings at ſome diſtance, caſtles, I preſume, and of great antiquity. The roads are very good, being, as I ſuſpect, the works of Julius Cæſar's army, for they ſtill preſerve, in many places, the appearance of a pavement in pretty good repair,

* Dr. Long, the maſter of Pembroke Hall, at this time read lectures in experimental philoſophy.

† All that follows is a humouroufly hyperbolic deſcription of the quadrangle of Peter-Houſe.

and,

and, if they were not ſo near home, might perhaps be as much admired as the Via Appia; there are at preſent ſeveral rivulets to be croſſed, and which ſerve to enliven the view all around. The country is exceeding fruitful in ravens and ſuch black cattle; but, not to tire you with my travels, I abruptly conclude Yours, &c.

Auguſt 1738.

LETTER XVII.

Mr. GRAY to Mr. WEST.

I Am coming away all ſo faſt, and leaving behind me, without the leaſt remorſe, all the beauties of Sturbridge Fair. Its white bears may roar, its apes may wring their hands, and crocodiles cry their eyes out, all's one for that; I ſhall not once viſit them, nor ſo much as take my leave. The univerſity has publiſhed a ſevere edict againſt ſchiſmatical congregations, and created half a dozen new little proctorlings to ſee its orders executed, being under mighty apprehenſions leſt Henley * and his gilt tub ſhould come to the Fair and ſeduce their young ones; but their pains are to ſmall purpoſe, for lo, after all, he is not coming.

I am at this inſtant in the very agonies of leaving college, and would not wiſh the worſt

* Orator Henley.

of

of my enemies a worſe ſituation. If you knew the duſt, the old boxes, the bedſteads, and tutors that are about my ears, you would look upon this letter as a great effort of my reſolution and unconcernedneſs in the midſt of evils. I fill up my paper with a looſe ſort of verſion of that ſcene in Paſtor Fido that begins, *Care ſelve beati* †.

Sept. 1738.

LETTER XVIII.

Mr. WEST to Mr. GRAY.

I Thank you again and again for your two laſt moſt agreeable letters. They could not have come more a-propos; I was without any

† This Latin verſion is extremely elegiack, but as it is only a verſion I do not inſert it. Mr. Gray did not begin to learn Italian till about a year and a half before he tranſlated this ſcene; and I find amongſt his papers an Engliſh tranſlation of part of the 4th Canto of Taſſo's Gieruſalemma Liberata, done previouſly to this, which has great merit. In a letter to Mr. Weſt, dated March, 1737, he ſays, "I learn Italian like "any dragon, and in two months am got through the 16th "book of Taſſo, whom I hold in great admiration: I want "you to learn too, that I may know your opinion of him; "nothing can be eaſier than that language to any one who "knows Latin and French already, and there are few ſo "copious and expreſſive." In the ſame letter he tells him, "that his College has ſet him a verſifying on a public occa-"ſion," (viz. thoſe verſes which are called Tripos) on the theme of "Luna eſt habitalis." The poem I believe is to be found in the Muſæ Etonenſes. I would further obſerve, on this occaſion, that though Mr. Gray had lately read and tranſlated Statius, yet when he attempted compoſition, his judgment immediately directed him to the beſt model of verſification; accordingly his hexameters are, as far as modern ones can be, after the manner of Virgil: they move in the ſucceſſion of his pauſes, and cloſe with his eliſions.

books

books to divert me, and they ſupplied the want of every thing: I made them my claſſicks in the country, they were my Horace and Tibullus—*Non ita loquor aſſentandi cauſâ ut probè noſti ſi me noris, verum quia ſic mea eſt ſententia.* I am but juſt come to town, and, to ſhew you my eſteem of your favours, I venture to ſend you by the penny poſt, to your father's, what you will find on the next page; I hope it will reach you ſoon after your arrival, your boxes out of the waggon, yourſelf out of the coach, and tutors out of your memory.

Adieu, we ſhall ſee one another, I hope, to-morrow.

E L E G I A.

Quod mihi tam gratæ miſiſti dona Camœnæ,
Qualia Mænalius Pan Deus ipſe velit,
Amplector te, Graie, et toto corde repoſco,
O deſiderium jam nimis uſque meum:
Et mihi rura placent, & me quoq; ſæpe volentem
Duxerunt Dryades per ſua prata Deæ;
Sicubi lympha fugit liquido pede, ſive virentem,
Magna decus nemoris, quercus opacat humum;
Illuc mane novo vagor, illuc veſpere ſero,
Et, noto ut jacui gramine, nota cano.
Nec noſtræ ignorant divinam Amaryllida ſylvæ:
Ah, ſi deſit Amor, nil mihi rura placent.
Ille jugis habitat Deus, ille in vallibus imis,
Regnat et in cœlis, regnat & Oceano;
Ille gregem tauroſq; domat, ſæviq; leonem
Seminis; ille feros, ultus Adonin, apros:

Quin

Quin & fervet amore nemus, ramoq; ſub omni
Concentu tremulo plurima gaudet avis.
Duræ etiam in ſylvis agitant connubia plantæ,
Dura etiam & fertur ſaxa animaſſe Venus.
Durior & ſaxis, & robore durior ille eſt,
Sincero ſiquis pectore amare vetat:
Non illi in manibus ſanctum deponere pignus,
Non illi arcanum cor aperire velim;
Neſcit amicitias, teneros qui neſcit amores:
Ah! ſi nulla Venus, nil mihi rura placent.
Me licet a patriâ longè in tellure juberent
Externâ poſitum ducere fata dies;
Si vultus modo amatus adeſſet, non ego contra
Plorarem magnos voce querente Deos.
At dulci in gremio curarum oblivia ducens
Nil cuperem præter poſſe placere meæ;
Nec bona Fortunæ aſpiciens, neq; munera regum,
Illa intrà optarem brachia cara mori.

Sept. 27, 1738.

* * * * *

Mr. Gray, on his return to town, continued at his father's houſe in Cornhill till the March following, in which interval, Mr. Walpole, being diſinclined to enter ſo early into the buſineſs of parliament, prevailed on Sir Robert Walpole to permit him to go abroad, and on Mr. Gray (as was ſaid before) to be the companion of his travels. Mr. Weſt ſpent the greateſt part of the winter with his mother and ſiſter at Epſom, during which time, a letter or two more paſſed between

between the two friends. But theſe I think it unneceſſary to inſert, as I have already given ſufficient ſpecimens of the bloſſoms of their genius. The reader of taſte and candour will, I truſt, conſider them only as ſuch; yet will be led to think that as the one produced afterwards "fruits worthy of paradiſe," the other, had he lived longer, would alſo have produced them.

END OF THE FIRST SECTION.

SECT.

SECTION THE SECOND.

AS I allot this Section entirely to that part of Mr. Gray's life, which he ſpent in travelling through France and Italy, my province will be chiefly that of an Editor; and my only care to ſelect, from a large collection of letters, written to his parents, and to his friend, Mr. Weſt, thoſe parts, which, I imagine, will be moſt likely either to inform or amuſe the reader. The multiplicity of accounts, publiſhed, both before and after the time when theſe letters were written, of thoſe very places which Mr. Gray deſcribes, will neceſſarily take from them much of their novelty; yet the elegant eaſe of his epiſtolary ſtyle has a charm in it for all readers of true taſte, that will make every apology of this ſort needleſs. They will perceive, that as theſe letters were written without even the moſt diſtant view of publication, they are eſſentially different, in their manner of deſcription, from any other that have either preceded or followed them; add to this, that they are interſperſed, occaſionally, with ſome exquiſitely finiſhed pieces of Latin poetry, which he compoſed on the ſpot, for the entertainment of his friend. But, not to anticipate any part of the reader's pleaſure, I ſhall only further ſay, to forewarn him of a diſappointment, that this correſpondence is defective towards the end, and includes

no

no deſcription either of Venice or its terrritory, the laſt places which Mr. Gray viſited. This defect was occaſioned by an unfortunate diſagreement between him and Mr. Walpole, ariſing from the difference of their tempers. The former being, from his earlieſt years, curious, penſive, and philoſophical; the latter, gay, lively, and, conſequently, inconſiderate *: this, therefore, occaſioned their ſeparation at Reggio. Mr. Gray went before him to Venice; and ſtaying there only till he could find means of returning to England, he made the beſt of his way home, repaſſing the Alps, and following almoſt the ſame route through France, by which he had before gone to Italy.

LETTER I.

Mr. GRAY to his MOTHER.

Amiens, April 1, N. S. 1739.

AS we made but a very ſhort journey to-day, and came to our inn early, I ſit down to give you ſome account of our expedi-

* In juſtice to the memory of ſo reſpectable a friend, Mr. Walpole enjoins me to charge him with the chief blame in their quarrel; confeſſing, that more attention, complaiſance, and deference to a warm friendſhip, and ſuperior judgment and prudence, might have prevented a rupture, that gave much uneaſineſs to them both, and a laſting concern to the ſurvivor; though in the year 1744, a reconciliation was effected between them, by a lady who wiſhed well to both parties.

tion.

tion. On the 29th (according to the ſtyle here) we left Dover at twelve at noon, and with a pretty briſk gale, which pleaſed every body mighty well, except myſelf, who was extremely ſick the whole time; we reached Calais by five: The weather changed, and it began to ſnow hard the minute we came into the harbour, where we took the boat, and ſoon landed. Calais is an exceeding old, but very pretty town, and we hardly ſaw any thing there that was not ſo new, and ſo different from England, that it ſurprized us agreeably. We went the next morning to the great Church, and were at High Maſs, it being Eaſter Monday. We ſaw alſo the convent of the Capuchins, and the Nuns of St. Dominick; with theſe laſt we held much converſation, eſpecially with an Engliſh Nun, a Mrs. Davis, of whoſe work I ſent you, by the return of the pacquet, a letter-caſe to remember her by. In the afternoon we took a poſt-chaiſe (it ſtill ſnowing very hard) for Boulogne, which was only eighteen miles further. This chaiſe is a ſtrange ſort of conveyance, of much greater uſe than beauty, reſembling an ill-ſhaped chariot, only with the door opening before, inſtead of the ſide; three horſes draw it, one between the ſhafts, and the other two on each ſide; on one of which the poſtillion rides, and drives too: This vehicle * will, upon occaſion, go

* This was before the introduction of poſt-chaiſes here, elſe it would not have appeared a circumſtance worthy notice.

fourſcore

fourſcore miles a-day, but Mr. Walpole, being in no hurry, chooſes to make eaſy journeys of it, and they are eaſy ones, indeed; for the motion is much like that of a ſedan; we go about ſix miles an hour, and commonly change horſes at the end of it: it is true, they are no very graceful ſteeds, but they go well, and through roads which, they ſay, are bad for France, but to me they ſeem gravel walks and bowling-greens; in ſhort it would be the fineſt travelling in the world, were it not for the inns, which are moſtly terrible places indeed. But to deſcribe our progreſs ſomewhat more regularly, we came into Boulogne when it was almoſt dark, and went out pretty early on Tueſday morning; ſo that all I can ſay about it is, that it is a large, old, fortified town, with more Engliſh in it than French. On Tueſday we were to go to Abbéville, ſeventeen leagues, or fifty-one ſhort Engliſh miles; but by the way we dined at Montreuil, much to our hearts' content, on ſtinking mutton cutlets, addle eggs, and ditch water. Madame, the hoſteſs, made her appearance in long lappets of bone lace, and a ſack of linſey-wolſey. We ſupped and lodged pretty well at Abbéville, and had time to ſee a little of it before we came out this morning. There are ſeventeen convents in it, out of which we ſaw the chapels of the Minims and the Carmelite Nuns. We are now come further thirty

miles

miles to Amiens, the chief city of the province of Picardy. We have ſeen the cathedral, which is juſt what that of Canterbury muſt have been before the reformation. It is about the ſame ſize, a huge Gothick building, beſet on the outſide with thouſands of ſmall ſtatues, and within adorned with beautiful painted windows, and a vaſt number of chapels dreſſed out in all their finery of altar pieces, embroidery, gilding, and marble. Over the high altar is preſerved, in a very large wrought ſhrine of maſſy gold, the reliques of St. Firmin, their patron ſaint. We went alſo to the chapels of the Jeſuits and Urſuline Nuns, the latter of which is very richly adorned. To-morrow we ſhall lie at Clermont, and next day reach Paris. The country we have paſſed through hitherto has been flat, open, but agreeably diverſified with villages, fields well cultivated, and little rivers. On every hillock is a wind-mill, a crucifix, or a Virgin Mary dreſſed in flowers, and a ſarſenet robe; one ſees not many people or carriages on the road; now and then, indeed, you meet a ſtrolling friar, a country-man with his great muff, or a woman, riding aſtride on a little aſs, with ſhort petticoats, and a great head-dreſs of blue wool. * * *

LETTER II.

Mr. GRAY to Mr. WEST.

ENFIN, donc, me voici à Paris. Mr. Walpole is gone out to ſupper at Lord Conway's, and here I remain alone, though invited too. Do not think I make a merit of writing to you preferably to a good ſupper; for theſe three days we have been here have actually given me an averſion to eating in general. If hunger be the beſt ſauce to meat, the French are certainly the worſt cooks in the world; for what tables we have ſeen have been ſo delicately ſerved, and ſo profuſely, that, after riſing from one of them, one imagines it impoſſible ever to eat again. And now, if I tell you all I have in my head, you will believe me mad, *mais, n'importe, courage, allons!* for if I wait till my head grows clear and ſettle a little, you may ſtay long enough for a letter. Six days have we been coming hither, which other people do in two; they have not been diſagreeable ones, through a fine, open country, admirable roads, and in an eaſy conveyance; the inns not abſolutely intolerable, and images, quite unuſual, preſenting themſelves on all hands. At Amiens we ſaw the fine cathedral, and eat *paté des perdrix*; paſſed through the park of Chantilly, by the Duke of Bourbon's palace, which we

we only beheld as we paſſed; broke down at Luſarch; ſtopped at St. Dennis, ſaw all the beautiful monuments of the Kings of France, and the vaſt treaſures of the abbey; rubies, and emeralds as big as ſmall eggs, crucifixes, and vows, crowns and reliquaries, of ineſtimable value; but, of all their curioſities, the thing the moſt to our taſtes, and which they, indeed, do the juſtice to eſteem the glory of their collection, was a vaſe of an entire onyx, meaſuring at leaſt five inches over, three deep, and of great thickneſs. It is at leaſt two thouſand years old, the beauty of the ſtone, and ſculpture upon it, (repreſenting the myſteries of Bacchus) beyond expreſſion admirable; we have dreamed of it ever ſince. The jolly old Benedictine, that ſhowed us the treaſures, had, in his youth, been ten years a ſoldier; he laughed at all the reliques, was very full of ſtories, and mighty obliging. On Saturday evening we got to Paris, and were driven through the ſtreets a long while before we knew where we were. The minute we came, voila Milors Holderneſſe, Conway, and his brother; all ſtayed ſupper, and till two o'clock in the morning, for here nobody ever ſleeps; it is not the way: Next day go to dine at my Lord Holderneſſe's, there was the Abbé Prevôt, author of the Cleveland, and ſeveral other pieces much eſteemed; the reſt were Engliſh. At night we went to the

Pandore; a ſpectácle literally, for it is nothing but a beautiful piece of machinery, of three ſcenes. The firſt repreſents the chaos, and by degrees the ſeparation of the elements. The ſecond, the temple of Jupiter, and the giving of the box to Pandora. The third, the opening of the box, and all the miſchiefs that enſued. An abſurd deſign, but executed in the higheſt perfection, and that in one of the fineſt theatres in the world; it is the grande ſale des machines in the palais de Tuileries. Next day dined at Lord Waldegrave's; then to the opera. Imagine to yourſelf, for the drama, four acts entirely unconnected with each other, each founded on ſome little hiſtory, ſkilfully taken out of an ancient author, *e. g.* Ovid's Metamorphoſes, &c. and with great addreſs converted into a French piece of gallantry. For inſtance, that which I ſaw, called the Ballet de la Paix, had its firſt act built upon the ſtory of Nireus. Homer having ſaid he was the handſomeſt man of his time, the poet, imagining ſuch a one could not want a miſtreſs, has given him one. Theſe two come in and ſing ſentiment in lamentable ſtrains, neither air or recitative; only to one's great joy, they are every now and then interrupted by a dance, or (to one's great ſorrow) by a chorus that borders the ſtage from one end to the other, and ſcreams, paſt all power of ſimile to repreſent. The ſecond act

act was Baucis and Philemon. Baucis is a beautiful young ſhepherdeſs, and Philemon her ſwain. Jupiter falls in love with her, but nothing will prevail upon her; ſo it is all mighty well, and the chorus ſing and dance the praiſes of Conſtancy. The two other acts were about Iphis and Ianthe, and the Judgment of Paris. Imagine, I ſay, all this tranſacted by cracked voices, trilling diviſions upon two notes and an half, accompanied by an orcheſtra of humſtrums, and a whole houſe more attentive than if Farinelli ſung, and you will almoſt have formed a juſt notion of the thing *. Our aſtoniſhment at their abſurdity you can never conceive; we had enough to do to expreſs it by ſcreaming an hour louder than the whole dramatis perſonæ. We have alſo ſeen twice the Comedie Françoiſe; firſt, the Mahomet ſecond, a tragedy that has had a great run of late; and the thing itſelf does not want its beauties, but the actors are beyond meaſure delightful. Mademoiſelle Gouſſin (Mr. Voltaire's Zara) has with a charming (though little) perſon the moſt pathetick tone of voice, the ſtneſi expreſ-

* Our author's ſentiments here ſeem to correſpond entirely with thoſe which J. J. Rouſſean afterwards publiſhed in his famous Lettre ſur la Muſique Francoiſe. In a French letter alſo, which Mr. Gray writ to his friend ſoon after this, he calls their muſic, "des miaulemens & des heurlemens effroyables, meles avec un tintamarre du diable: voila la muſique Francoiſe en abrege."

ſion in her face, and moſt proper action imaginable. There is alſo a Dufrêne who did the chief character, a handſome man and a prodigious fine actor. The ſecond we ſaw was the Philoſophe marié, and here they performed as well in comedy; there is a Mademoiſelle Quinault, ſomewhat in Mrs. Clive's way, and a Monſieur Grandval, in the nature of Wilks, who is the genteeleſt thing in the world. There are ſeveral more, would be much admired in England, and many (whom we have not ſeen) much celebrated here. Great part of our time is ſpent in ſeeing churches and palaces full of fine pictures, &c. the quarter of which is not yet exhauſted. For my part, I could entertain myſelf this month merely with the common ſtreets and the people in them. * * *

LETTER III.

Mr. GRAY to Mr. WEST.

Paris, May 22, 1739.

AFTER the little particulars aforeſaid I ſhould have proceeded to a journal of our tranſactions for this week paſt, ſhould have carried you poſt from hence to Verſailles, hurried you through the gardens to Trianon, back again

again to Paris, ſo away to Chantilly. But the fatigue is perhaps more than you can bear, and moreover I think I have reaſon to ſtomach your laſt piece of gravity. Suppoſing you were in your ſobereſt mood, I am ſorry you ſhould think me capable of ever being ſo diſſipé, ſo evaporé, as not to be in a condition of reliſhing any thing you could ſay to me. And now, if you have a mind to make your peace with me, arouſe ye from your megrims and your melancholies, and (for exerciſe is good for you) throw away your night-cap, call for your jack-boots, and ſet out with me, laſt Saturday evening, for Verſailles— and ſo at eight o'clock, paſſing through a road ſpeckled with vines, and villas, and hares, and patridges, we arrive at the great avenue, flanked on either hand with a double row of trees about half a mile long, and with the palace itſelf to terminate the view; facing which, on each ſide of you, is placed a ſemicircle of very handſome buildings, which form the ſtables. Theſe we will not enter into, becauſe you know we are no jockies. Well! and is this the great front of Verſailles? What a huge heap of littleneſs! it is compoſed, as it were, of three courts, all open to the eye at once, and gradually diminiſhing till you come to the royal apartments, which on this ſide preſent but half a dozen windows and a balcony. This laſt is all that can be called a front, for the reſt

is only great wings. The hue of all this maſs is black, dirty red, and yellow; the firſt proceeding from ſtone changed by age; the ſecond, from a mixture of brick; and the laſt, from a profuſion of tarniſhed gilding. You cannot ſee a more diſagreeable tout-enſemble; and, to finiſh the matter, it is all ſtuck over in many places, with ſmall buſts of a tawny hue, between every window. We paſs through this, to go into the garden, and here the caſe is indeed altered; nothing can be vaſter and more magnificent than the back front; before it a very ſpacious terrace ſpreads itſelf, adorned with two large baſons; theſe are bordered and lined (as moſt of the others) with white marble, with handſome ſtatues of bronze reclined on their edges. From hence you deſcend a huge flight of ſteps into a ſemicircle formed by woods, that are cut all round into niches, which are filled with beautiful copies of all the famous antique ſtatues in white marble. Juſt in the middle is the baſon of Latona; ſhe and her children are ſtanding on the top of a rock in the middle, on the ſide of which, are the peaſants, ſome half, ſome totally changed into frogs, all which throw out water at her in great plenty. From this place runs on the great alley, which brings you into a compleat round, where is the baſon of Apollo, the biggeſt in the gardens. He is riſing in his car out of the water, ſurrounded by nymphs

and

and tritons, all in bronze and finely executed, and theſe, as they play, raiſe a perfect ſtorm about him; beyond this is the great canal, a prodigious long piece of water, that terminates the whole: All this you have at one coup d'oeil in entering the garden, which is truly great. I cannot ſay as much of the general taſte of the place; every thing you behold favours too much of art; all is forced, all is conſtrained about you; ſtatues and vaſes ſowed every where without diſtinction; ſugar-loaves and minced-pieces of yew; ſcrawl-work of box, and little ſquirting jets-d'eau, beſides a great ſameneſs in the walks, cannot help ſtriking one at firſt ſight, not to mention the ſilleſt of labyrinths, and all Æſop's fables in water; ſince theſe were deſigned in *uſum Delphini* only. Here then we walk by moon-light, and hear the ladies and the nightingales ſing. Next morning, being Whitſunday, make ready to go to the Inſtallation of nine Knights du Saint Eſprit, Cambis is one: high maſs celebrated with muſic, great croud, much incenſe, King, Queen, Dauphin, Meſdames, Cardinals, and Court: Knights arrayed by his majeſty; reverences before the altar, not bows, but curtſies; ſtiff hams; much tittering among the ladies; trumpets, kettle-drums and fifes. My dear Weſt, I am vaſtly delighted with Trianon, all of us with Chantilly; if you would know why, you muſt have patience,

for I can hold my pen no longer, except to tell you that I ſaw Britannicus laſt night; all the characters, particularly Agrippina and Nero, done to perfection; to-morrow Phædra and Hippolitus. We are making you a little bundle of petite pieces; there is nothing in them, but they are acting at preſent; there are too Crebillon's Letters, and Amuſements ſur le language des Bêtes, ſaid to be of one Bougeant, a Jeſuit; they are both eſteemed, and lately come out. This day ſe'nnight we go to Rheims.

LETTER IV.

Mr. GRAY to his MOTHER.

Rheims, June 21, *N. S.* 1739.

WE have now been ſettled almoſt three weeks in this city, which is more conſiderable upon account of its ſize and antiquity, than from the number of its inhabitants, or any advantages of commerce. There is little in it worth a ſtranger's curioſity, beſides the cathedral church, which is a vaſt Gothick building of a ſurprizing beauty and lightneſs, all covered over with a profuſion of little ſtatues and other ornaments. It is here the Kings of France are crowned by the Archbiſhop of Rheims, who is the firſt Peer, and the Primate of the kingdom: The holy veſſel made uſe of on

on that occaſion, which contains the oil, is kept in the church of St. Nicaſius hard by, and is believed to have been brought by an angel from Heaven at the coronation of Clovis, the firſt chriſtian king. The ſtreets in general have but a melancholy aſpect, the houſes all old; the publick walks run along the ſide of a great moat under the ramparts, where one hears a continual croaking of frogs; the country round about is one great plain covered with vines, which at this time of the year, afford no very pleaſing proſpect, as being not above a foot high. What pleaſures the place denies to the ſight, it makes up to the palate; ſince you have nothing to drink but the beſt champaigne in the world, and all ſorts of proviſions equally good. As to other pleaſures, there is not that freedom of converſation among the people of faſhion here, that one ſees in other parts of France; for though they are not very numerous in this palace and conſequently muſt live a good deal together, yet they never come to any great familiarity with one another. As my Lord Conway had ſpent a good part of his time among them, his brother, and we with him, were ſoon introduced into all their aſſemblies: As ſoon as you enter, the lady of the houſe preſents each of you a card, and offers you a party at quadrille; you ſit down and play forty deals without intermiſſion, excepting one

one quarter of an hour, when every body riſes to eat of what they call the gouter, which ſupplies the place of our tea, and is a ſervice of wine, fruits, cream, ſweetmeats, crawfiſh and cheeſe. People take what they like, and ſit down again to play; after that, they make little parties to go to the walks together, and then all the company retire to their ſeparate habitations. Very ſeldom any ſuppers or dinners are given; and this is the manner they live among one another; not ſo much out of any averſion they have to pleaſure, as out of a ſort of formality they have contracted by not being much frequented by people who have lived at Paris. It is ſure they do not hate gaiety any more than the reſt of their country-people, and can enter into diverſions, that are once propoſed, with a good grace enough; for inſtance, the other evening we happened to be got together in a company of eighteen people, men and women of the beſt faſhion here, at a garden in town to walk; when one of the ladies bethought herſelf of aſking, Why ſhould not we ſup here? Immediately the cloth was laid by the ſide of a fountain under the trees, and a very elegant ſupper ſerved up; after which another ſaid, Come, let us ſing; and directly began herſelf: From ſinging we inſenſibly fell to dancing, and ſinging in a round; when ſomebody mentioned the violins, and immediately a company

pany of them was ordered: Minuets were begun in the open air, and then came country-dances, which held till four o'Clock next morning; at which hour the gayeſt lady there propoſed, that ſuch as were weary ſhould get into their coaches, and the reſt of them ſhould dance before them with the muſick in the van; and in this manner we paraded through all the principal ſtreets of the city, and waked every body in it. Mr. Walpole had a mind to make a cuſtom of the thing, and would have given a ball in the ſame manner next week, but the women did not come into it; ſo I believe it will drop, and they will return to their dull cards, and uſual formalities. We are not to ſtay above a month longer here, and ſhall then go to Dijon, the chief city of Burgundy, a very ſplendid and a very gay town; at leaſt ſuch is the preſent deſign.

LETTER V.

Mr. GRAY to his FATHER.

Dijon, Friday, Sept. 11, *N. S.* 1739.

WE have made three ſhort days journey of it from Rheims hither, where we arrived the night before laſt: The road we have paſſed through has been extremely agreeable;

able; it runs through the moſt fertile part of Champaigne by the ſide of the river Marne, with a chain of hills on each hand at ſome diſtance, entirely covered with woods and vineyards, and every now and then the ruins of ſome old caſtle on their tops; we lay at St. Dizier the firſt night, and at Langres the ſecond, and got hither the next evening time enough to have a full view of the city in entering it: It lies in a very extenſive plain covered with vines and corn, and conſequently is plentifully ſupplied with both. I need not tell you that it is the chief city of Burgundy, nor that it is of great antiquity; conſidering which one ſhould imagine it ought to be larger than one finds it. However, what it wants in extent, is made up in beauty and cleanlineſs, and in rich convents and churches, moſt of which we have ſeen. The palace of the States is a magnificent new building, where the Duke of Bourbon is lodged when he comes every three years to hold that Aſſembly, as governor of the Province. A quarter of a mile out of the town is a famous Abbey of Carthuſians, which we are juſt returned from ſeeing. In their chapel are the tombs of the ancient Dukes of Burgundy, that were ſo powerful, till at the death of Charles the Bold, the laſt of them, this part of his dominions was united by Lewis XI. to the crown of France. To-morrow we are to

pay

pay a viſit to the Abbot of the Ciſtercians, who lives a few leagues off, and who uſes to receive all ſtrangers with great civility; his Abbey is one of the richeſt in the kingdom; he keeps open houſe always, and lives with great magnificence. We have ſeen enough of this town already, to make us regret the time we ſpent at Rheims; it is full of people of condition, who ſeem to form a much more agreeable ſociety than we found in Champaigne; but as we ſhall ſtay here but two or three days longer, it is not worth while to be introduced into their houſes. On Monday or Tueſday we are to ſet out for Lyons, which is two days journey diſtant, and from thence you ſhall hear again from me.

LETTER VI.

Mr. GRAY to Mr. WEST.

Lyons, Sept. 18, *N. S.* 1739.

SCAVEZ vous bien, mon cher ami, que je vous hais, que je vous deteſte? voila des termes un peu fortes; and that will ſave me, upon a juſt computation, a page of paper and ſix drops of ink; which, if I confined myſelf to reproaches of a more moderate nature, I ſhould be obliged to employ in uſing you according to

to your deſerts. What! to let any body reſide three months at Rheims, and write but once to them? Pleaſe to conſult Tully de Amicis page 5, line 25, and you will find it ſaid in expreſs terms, *Ad amicum inter Remos relegatum menſe uno quinquies ſcriptum eſto*; nothing more plain, or leſs liable to falſe interpretations.—Now becauſe, I ſuppoſe, it will give you pain to know we are in being, I take this opportunity to tell you that we are at the ancient and celebrated Lugdunum, a city ſituated upon the confluence of the Rhône and Saône (Arar, I ſhould ſay) two people who, though of tempers extremely unlike, think fit to join hands here, and make a little party to travel to the Mediterranean in company; the lady comes gliding along through the fruitful plains of Burgundy, *incredibili lenitate, ita ut oculis in utram partem fluit judicari non poſſit*; the gentleman runs all rough and roaring down from the mountains of Switzerland to meet her; and with all her ſoft airs ſhe likes him never the worſe; ſhe goes through the middle of the city in ſtate, and he paſſes incog. without the walls, but waits for her a little below. The houſes here are ſo high, and the ſtreets ſo narrow, as would be ſufficient to render Lyons the diſmalleſt place in the world, but the number of people, and the face of commerce diffuſed about it, are, at leaſt, as ſufficient to make it the

the livelieſt: Between theſe two ſufficiencies, you will be in doubt what to think of it; ſo we ſhall leave the city, and proceed to its environs, which are beautiful beyond expreſſion; it is ſurrounded with mountains, and thoſe mountains all bedropped and beſpeckled with houſes, gardens, and plantations of the rich Bourgeois, who have from thence a proſpect of the city in the vale below on one hand, on the other, the rich plains of the Lyonnois, with the rivers winding among them, and the Alps, with the mountains of Dauphiné, to bound the view. All yeſterday morning we were buſied in climbing up Mount Fourviere, where the ancient city ſtood perched at ſuch a height, that nothing but the hopes of gain could certainly ever perſuaded their neighbours to pay them a viſit: Here are the ruins of the Emperors palaces, that reſided here, that is to ſay, Auguſtus and Severus; they conſiſt in nothing but in great maſſes of old walls, that have only their quality to make them reſpected. In a vineyard of the Minims are remains of a theatre; the Fathers, whom they belong to, hold them in no eſteem at all, and would have ſhowed us their ſacriſty and chapel inſtead of them: The Urſuline Nuns have in their garden ſome Roman baths, but we having the misfortune to be men, and hereticks, they did not think proper to admit us. Hard by are eight

arches

arches of a moſt magnificent aqueduct, ſaid to be erected by Antony, when his legions were quartered here: There are many other parts of it diſperſed up and down the country, for it brought the water from a river many leagues off in La Forez. Here are remains too of Agrippa's ſeven great roads which met at Lyons; in ſome places they lie twelve feet deep in the ground: In ſhort, a thouſand matters that you ſhall not know, till you give me a deſcription of the Païs de Tombridge, and the effect its waters have upon you.

LETTER VII.

Mr. WEST to Mr. GRAY.

Temple, Sept. 28, 1739.

IF wiſhes could turn to realities, I would fling down my law books, and ſup with you to-night. But alas, here am I doomed to fix, while you are fluttering from city to city, and enjoying all the pleaſures which a gay climate can afford. It is out of the power of my heart to envy you your good fortune, yet I cannot help indulging a few natural deſires; as for example, to take a walk with you on the banks of the Rhône, and to be climbing up mount Fourviere;

Jam

Jam mens prætrepidans avet vagari:
Jam læti ſtudio pedes vigeſcunt.

However, ſo long as I am not deprived of your correſpondence, ſo long ſhall I always find ſome pleaſure in being at home. And, ſetting all vain curioſity aſide, when the fit is over, and my reaſon begins to come to herſelf, I have ſeveral other powerful motives which might eaſily cure me of my reſtleſs inclinations: Amongſt theſe, my mother's ill ſtate of health, is not the leaſt; which was the reaſon of our going to Tunbridge, ſo that you cannot expect much deſcription or amuſement from thence. Nor indeed is there much room for either; for all diverſions there may be reduced to two articles, gaming and going to church. They were pleaſed to publiſh certain Tunbridgiana this ſeaſon; but ſuch ana! I believe there were never ſo many vile little verſes put together before. So much for Tunbridge: London affords me as little to ſay. What! ſo huge a town as London? Yes, conſider only how I live in that town. I never go into the gay world or high world, and conſequently receive nothing from thence, to brighten my imagination. The buſy world I leave to the buſy; and am reſolved never to talk politicks till I can act at the ſame time. To tell old ſtories, or prate of old books, ſeems a little muſty,; and toujours Chapon bouilli,

bouilli, won't do. However, for want of better fare, take another little mouthful of my poetry.

O meæ jucunda comes quietis!
Quæ fere ægrotum ſolita es levare
Pectus, et ſenſim ah! nimis ingruentes
Fallere curas:

Quid canes? quanto Lyra dic furore
Geſties, quando hâc reducem ſodalem
Glauciam * gaudere ſimul videbis
Meque ſub umbrâ?

LETTER VIII.

Mr. GRAY to his MOTHER.

Lyons, Oct. 13, N. S, 1739.

IT is now almoſt five weeks ſince I left Dijon, one of the gayeſt and moſt agreeable little cities of France, for Lyons its reverſe in all theſe particulars. It is the ſecond in the kingdom in bigneſs and rank, the ſtreets exceſſively narrow and naſty; the houſes immenſely high and large; (that, for inſtance, where we are lodged, has twenty-five rooms on a floor, and that for five ſtories) it ſwarms with inhabitants like Paris itſelf, but chiefly a mercantile people, too

* He gives Mr. Gray the name of Glaucias frequently in his Latin verſe, as Mr. Gray calls him Favonius.

much

much given up to commerce to think of their own, much leſs of a ſtranger's diverſions. We have no acquaintance in the town, but ſuch Engliſh as happen to be paſſing through here, in their way to Italy and the South, which at preſent happen to be near thirty in number. It is a fortnight ſince we ſet out from hence upon a little excurſion to Geneva. We took the longeſt road, which lies through Savoy, on purpoſe to ſee a famous monaſtery, called the grand Chartreuſe, and had no reaſon to think our time loſt. After having travelled ſeven days very ſlow (for we did not change horſes, it being impoſſible for a chaiſe to go poſt in theſe roads) we arrived at a little village, among the mountains of Savoy, called Echelles; from thence we proceeded on horſes, who are uſed to the way, to the mountain of the Chartreuſe: It is ſix miles to the top; the road runs winding up it, commonly not ſix feet broad; on one hand is the rock, with woods of pine-trees hanging over head; on the other, a monſtrous precipice, almoſt perpendicular, at the bottom of which rolls a torrent, that ſometimes tumbling among the fragments of ſtone that have fallen from on high, and ſometimes precipitating itſelf down vaſt deſcents, with a noiſe like thunder, which is ſtill made greater by the echo from the mountains on each ſide, concurs to form one of the moſt ſolemn, the moſt romantick, and the moſt aſtoniſhing

aſtoniſhing ſcenes I ever beheld: Add to this, the ſtrange views made by the craggs and cliffs on the other hand; the caſcades that, in many places, throw themſelves from the very ſummit down into the vale, and the river below; and many other particulars impoſſible to deſcribe; you will conclude we had no occaſion to repent our pains. This place St. Bruno choſe to retire to, and upon its very top founded the aforeſaid convent, which is the ſuperior of the whole order. When we came there, the two fathers, who are commiſſioned to entertain ſtrangers, (for the reſt muſt neither ſpeak one to another, nor to any one elſe) received us very kindly; and ſet before us a repaſt of dried fiſh, eggs, butter, and fruits, all excellent in their kind, and extremely neat. They preſſed us to ſpend the night there, and to ſtay ſome days with them; but this we could not do, ſo they led us about their houſe, which is, you muſt think, like a little city; for there are an hundred fathers, beſides three hundred ſervants, that make their cloths, grind their corn, preſs their wine, and do every thing among themſelves: The whole is quite orderly and ſimple; nothing of finery, but the wonderful decency, and the ſtrange ſituation, more than ſupply the place of it. In the evening we deſcended by the ſame way, paſſing through many clouds that were then forming themſelves on the mountain's ſide.

Next

Next day we continued our journey by Chamberry, which, though the chief city of the dutchy, and reſidence of the king of Sardinia, when he comes into this part of his dominions, makes but a very mean and inſignificant appearance; we lay at Aix, once famous for its hot baths, and the next night at Annecy; the day after, by noon, we got to Geneva. I have not time to ſay any thing about it, nor of our ſolitary journey back again. * * *

LETTER IX.

Mr. GRAY to his FATHER.

Lyons, Oct. 25, N. S. 1739.

IN my laſt I gave you the particulars of our little journey to Geneva; I have only to add, that we ſtayed about a week, in order to ſee Mr. Conway ſettled there: I do not wonder ſo many Engliſh chooſe it for their reſidence; the city is very ſmall, neat, prettily built, and extremely populous; the Rhône runs through the middle of it, and it is ſurrounded with new fortifications, that give it a military compact air; which, joined to the happy lively countenances of the inhabitants, and an exact diſcipline always as ſtrictly obſerved as in time of war, makes the little republick appear a match for a much greater power; though perhaps Geneva,

neva, and all that belongs to it, are not of equal extent with Windſor and its two parks. To one that has paſſed through Savoy, as we did, nothing can be more ſtriking than the contraſt, as ſoon as he approaches the town. Near the gates of Geneva runs the torrent Arve, which ſeparates it from the King of Sardinia's dominions; on the other ſide of it lies a country, naturally, indeed, fine and fertile; but you meet with nothing in it but meagre, ragged, bare-footed peaſants, with their children, in extreme miſery and naſtineſs; and even of theſe no great numbers: You no ſooner have croſſed the ſtream I have mentioned, but poverty is no more; not a beggar, hardly a diſcontented face to be ſeen; numerous and well-dreſſed people ſwarming on the ramparts; drums beating; ſoldiers, well-clothed and armed, exerciſing; and folks with buſineſs in their looks hurrying to and fro; all contribute to make any perſon, who is not blind, ſenſible what a difference there is between the two governments, that are the cauſes of one view and the other. The beautiful lake, at one end of which the town is ſituated, its extent, the ſeveral ſtates that border upon it, and all its pleaſures, are too well known for me to mention them. We ſailed upon it as far as the dominions of Geneva extend, that is, about two leagues and an half on each ſide; and landed at ſeveral of the little houſes

houſes of pleaſure, that the inhabitants have built all about it, who received us with much politeneſs. The ſame night we eat part of a trout, taken in the lake, that weighed thirty-ſeven pounds; as great a monſter as it appeared to us, it was eſteemed there nothing extraordinary, and they aſſured us, it was not uncommon to catch them of fifty pounds; they are dreſſed here, and ſent poſt to Paris, upon ſome great occaſions; nay, even to Madrid, as we are told. The road we returned through was not the ſame we came by: We croſſed the Rhône at Seyſſel, and paſſed for three days among the mountains of Bugey, without meeting with any thing new: At laſt we came out into the plains of La Breſſe, and ſo to Lyons again. Sir Robert has written to Mr. Walpole, to deſire he would go to Italy; which he has reſolved to do; ſo that all the ſcheme of ſpending the winter in the South of France, is laid aſide, and we are to paſs it in a much finer country. You may imagine I am not ſorry to have this opportunity of ſeeing the place in the world that beſt deſerves it: Beſides, as the Pope (who is eighty-eight, and has been lately at the point of death) cannot probably laſt a great while, perhaps we may have the fortune to be preſent at the election of a new one, when Rome will be in all its glory. Friday next we certainly begin our journey; in two days we ſhall come to the foot of the Alps, and ſix more we ſhall

be in paſſing them. Even here the winter is begun; what then muſt it be among thoſe vaſt ſnowy mountains, where it is hardly ever ſummer? We are, however, as well armed as poſſible againſt the cold, with muffs, hoods, and maſks of bever, fur-boots and bear ſkins. When we arrive at Turin, we ſhall reſt after the fatigues of the journey. * * *

LETTER X.

Mr GRAY to his MOTHER.

Turin, Nov. 7, N. S. 1739.

I Am this night arrived here, and have juſt ſet down to reſt me after eight days tireſome journey: For the three firſt, we had the ſame road we before paſt through to go to Geneva; the fourth we turned out of it, and for that day and the next travelled rather among than upon the Alps; the way commonly running through a deep valley by the ſide of the river Arc, which works itſelf a paſſage, with great difficulty and a mighty noiſe, among vaſt quantities of rocks, that have rolled down from the mountain tops. The winter was ſo far advanced, as in great meaſure to ſpoil the beauty of the proſpect; however, there was ſtill ſomewhat fine remaining amidſt the ſavageneſs and horrour of the place: The ſixth, we began to go up ſeveral of theſe moun-

mountains; and as we were paſſing one, met with an odd accident enough: Mr. Walpole had a little fat black ſpaniel, that he was very fond of, which he ſometimes uſed to ſet down, and let it run by the chaiſe ſide. We were at that time in a very rough road, not two yards broad at moſt; on one ſide was a great wood of pines, and on the other a vaſt precipice; it was noon-day, and the ſun ſhone bright, when all of a ſud-den, from the wood-ſide, (which was as ſteep upwards, as the other part was downwards) out ruſhed a great wolf, came cloſe to the head of the horſes, ſeized the dog by the throat, and ruſhed up the hill again with him in his mouth. This was done in leſs than a quarter of a mi-nute; we all ſaw it, and yet the ſervants had not time to draw their piſtols, or do any thing to ſave the dog *. If he had not been there, and the creature had thought fit to lay hold of one of the horſes, chaiſe, and we, and all, muſt inevitably have tumbled above fifty fa-thoms perpendicular down the precipice. The ſeventh we came to Lanebourg, the laſt town in the Savoy; it lies at the foot of the famous mount Cenis, which is ſo ſituated as to allow no room for any way but over the very top of it. Here the chaiſe was forced to be pulled to

* This odd incident might have afforded Mr. Gray a ſub-ject for an ode, which would have been a good companion to that on the death of a favourite cat.

pieces, and the baggage and that to be carried by mules: We ourſelves were wrapped up in our furs, and ſeated upon a ſort of matted chair, without legs, which is carried upon poles, in the manner of a bier, and ſo began to aſcend by the help of eight men. It was ſix miles to the top, where a plain opens itſelf about as many more in breadth, covered perpetually with very deep ſnow, and in the midſt of that a great lake of unſathomable depth, from whence a river takes its riſe, and tumbles over monſtrous rocks quite down the other ſide of the mountain. The deſcent is ſix miles more, but infinitely more ſteep than the going up; and here the men perfectly fly down with you, ſtepping from ſtone to ſtone with incredible ſwiftneſs, in places where none but they could go three paces without falling. The immenſity of the precipices, the roaring of the river, and torrents that run into it, the huge craggs covered with ice and ſnow, and the clouds below you and about you, are objects it is impoſſible to conceive without ſeeing them; and though we had heard many ſtrange deſcriptions of the ſcene, none of them at all came up to it. We were but five hours in performing the whole, from which you may judge of the rapidity of the men's motion. We are now got into Piedmont, and ſtopped a little while at La Ferriere, a ſmall village about three quarters of the way down, but ſtill among the

the clouds, where we began to hear a new language ſpoken round about us; at laſt we got quite down, went through the Pás du Suſe, a narrow road among the Alps, defended by two fortreſſes, and lay at Boſſolens: Next evening thro' a fine avenue, of nine miles in length, as ſtraight as a line, we arrived at this city, which, as you know, is the capital of the principality, and the reſidence of the King of Sardinia. * * * We ſhall ſtay here, I believe, a fortnight, and proceed for Genoa, which is three or four days journey to go poſt. I am, &c.

LETTER XI.

Mr. GRAY to Mr. WEST.

Turin, Nov. 16, N. S. 1739.

AFTER eight days journey through Greenland, we arrived at Turin. You approach it by a handſome avenue of nine miles long, and quite ſtraight. The entrance is guarded by certain vigilant dragons, called Doäniers, who mumbled us for ſome time. The city is not large, as being a place of ſtrength, and

* * * That part of the letter here omitted, contained only a deſcription of the city; which, as Mr. Gray has given it to Mr. Weſt in the following letter, and that in a more lively manner, I thought it unneceſſary to inſert. A liberty I have taken in other parts of this correſpondence, in order to avoid repetitions.

conſequently confined within its fortifications; it has many beauties and ſome faults; among the firſt, are ſtreets all laid out by the line, regular uniform buildings, fine walks that ſurround the whole, and in general a good lively clean appearance: But the houſes are of brick plaiſtered, which is apt to want repairing; the windows of oiled paper, which is apt to be torn; and every thing very ſlight, which is apt to tumble down. There is an excellent opera, but it is only in the carnival: Balls every night, but only in the carnival. Maſquerades too, but only in the carnival. This carnival laſts only from Chriſtmas to Lent; one half of the remaining part of the year is paſſed in remembering the laſt, the other in expecting the future carnival. We cannot well ſubſiſt upon ſuch ſlender diet, no more than upon an execrable Italian comedy, and a puppet-ſhow, called Repreſentazione d'un' anima dannata, which, I think, are all the preſent diverſions of the place; except the Marquiſe de Cavaillac's Converſatione, where one goes to ſee people play at Ombre and Taroc, a game with ſeventy-two cards all painted with ſuns, and moons, and devils and monks. Mr. Walpole has been at court; the family are at preſent at a country palace, called La Venerie. The palace here in town is the very quinteſſence of gilding and looking-glaſs; inlaid floors, carved pannels, and painting, wherever they could ſtick

ſtick a bruſh. I own I have not, as yet, any where met with thoſe grand and ſimple works of art, that are to amaze one, and whoſe ſight one is to be the better for: But thoſe of nature have aſtoniſhed me beyond expreſſion. In our little journey up to the Grande Chartreuſe, I do not remember to have gone ten paces without an exclamation, that there was no reſtraining: Not a precipice, not a torrent, not a cliff, but is pregnant with religion and poetry. There are certain ſcenes that would awe an atheiſt into belief, without the help of other argument. One need not have a very fantaſtic imagination to ſee ſpirits there at noon-day: You have death perpetually before your eyes, only ſo far removed, as to compoſe the mind without frighting it. I am well perſuaded St. Bruno was a man of no common genius, to chooſe ſuch a ſituation for his retirement; and I, perhaps, ſhould have been a diſciple of his, had I been born in his time. You may believe Abelard and Heloiſe were not forgot on this occaſion: If I do not miſtake, I ſaw you too every now and then at a diſtance among the trees; *il me ſemble, que j'ai veu ce chien de viſage là quelque part*. You ſeemed to call me from the other ſide of the precipice, but the noiſe of the river below was ſo great, that I really could not diſtinguiſh what you ſaid; it ſeemed to have a cadence like verſe. In your next you will be ſo

kind as to let me know what it was. The week we have ſince paſſed among the Alps, has not equalled the ſingle day upon that mountain, becauſe the winter was rather too advanced, and the weather a little foggy. However, it did not want its beauties; the ſavage rudeneſs of the view is inconceivable without ſeeing it: I reckoned, in one day, thirteen caſcades, the leaſt of which was, I dare ſay, one hundred feet in height. I had Livy in the chaiſe with me, and beheld his "Nives cœlo prope im-"miſtæ, tecta informia impoſita rupibus, pe-"cora jumentaque torrida frigore, homines in-"tonſi & inculti, animalia inanimaque omnia "rigentia gelu; omnia confragoſa, prærup-"taque." The creatures that inhabit them are, in all reſpects, below humanity; and moſt of them, eſpecially women, have the *tumidum guttur*, which they call *Goſcia*. Mount Cenis, I confeſs, carries the permiſſion mountains have of being frightful, rather too far; and its horrours were accompanied with too much danger to give one time to reflect upon their beauties. There is a family of the Alpine monſters I have mentioned, upon its very top, that in the middle of winter calmly lay in their ſtock of proviſions and firing, and ſo are buried in their hut for a month or two under the ſnow. When we were down it, and had got a little way into Piedmont, we began to find "Apricos quoſdam "colles,

" colles, rivoſque prope ſylvas, et jam humana " cultu digniora loca." I read Silius Italicus too, for the firſt time; and wiſhed for you according to cuſtom. We ſet out for Genoa in two days time.

LETTER XII.

Mr. GRAY to Mr. WEST.

Genoa, Nov 21, 1739.

HORRIDOS tractus, Boreæq; linquens
Regna Taurini fera, molliorem
Advehor brumam, Genuæq; amantes
Littora ſolis.

At leaſt if they do not, they have a very ill taſte; for I never beheld any thing more amiable: Only figure to yourſelf a vaſt ſemicircular baſon, full of fine blue ſea, and veſſels of all ſorts and ſizes, ſome ſailing out, ſome coming in, and others at anchor; and all round it palaces and and churches peeping over one another's heads, gardens and marble terraces full of orange and cypreſs trees, fountains, and trellis-works covered with vines, which all together compoſe the grandeſt of theatres. This is the firſt coup d'oeil, and is almoſt all I am yet able to give you an account of, for we arrived late laſt night. To-day was, luckily, a great feſtival, and in the morning we reſorted to the church of the

Madonna delle Vigne, to put up our little oriſons; (I believe I forgot to tell you, that we have been ſome time converts to the holy Catholic church) we found our Lady richly dreſſed out, with a crown of diamonds on her own head, another upon the child's, and a conſtellation of wax lights burning before them: Shortly after came the Doge, in his robes of crimſon damaſk, and a cap of the ſame, followed by the Senate in black. Upon his approach began a fine concert of muſic, and among the reſt two eunuchs' voices, that were a perfect feaſt to ears that had heard nothing but French operas for a year. We liſtened to this, and breathed nothing but incenſe for two hours. The Doge is a very tall, lean, ſtately old figure, called Conſtantino Balbi; and the ſenate ſeem to have been made upon the ſame model. They ſaid their prayers, and heard an abſurd white friar preach, with equal devotion. After this we went to the Annonciata, a church built by the family Lomellini, and belonging to it; which is, indeed, a moſt ſtately ſtructure, the inſide wholly of marble of various kinds, except where gold and painting takes its place. From hence to the Palazzo Doria. I ſhould make you ſick of marble, if I told you how it was laviſhed here upon the porticoes, the baluſtrades, and terraces, the loweſt of which extends quite to the ſea. The inſide is by no means anſwerable to the outward magnificence; the furniture ſeems to be as old as the founder of the family. There great imboſſed

ſilver

ſilver tables tell you, in bas-relief, his victories at ſea; how he entertained the Emperor Charles, and how he refuſed the ſovereignty of the Commonwealth when it was offered him; the reſt is old-faſhioned velvet chairs, and gothic tapeſtry. The reſt of the day has been ſpent, much to our heart's content, in curſing French muſic and architecture, and in ſinging the praiſes of Italy. We find this place ſo very fine, that we are in fear of finding nothing finer. We are fallen in love with the Mediterranean ſea, and hold your lakes and rivers in vaſt contempt. This is

"The happy country where huge lemons grow,"

as Waller ſays; and I am ſorry to think of leaving it in a week for Parma, although it be

The happy country where huge cheeſes grow.

LETTER XIII.

Mr. GRAY to his MOTHER.

Bologne, Dec. 9, *N. S.* 1739.

OUR journey hither has taken up much leſs time than I expected. We left Genoa (a charming place, and one that deſerved a longer ſtay) the week before laſt; croſſed the mountains, and lay that night at Tortona, the next at St. Giovanni, and the morning after came to Piacenza. That city, (though the

the capital of a Dutchy) made ſo frippery an appearance, that inſtead of ſpending ſome days there, as had been intended, we only dined, and went on to Parma; ſtayed there all the following day, which was paſſed in viſiting the famous works of Corregio in the Dome, and other churches. The fine gallery of pictures, that once belonged to the Dukes of Parma, is no more here; the King of Naples has carried it all thither, and the city had not merit enough to detain us any longer, ſo we proceeded through Reggio to Modena; this, though the reſidence of its Duke, is an ill-built melancholy place, all of brick, as are moſt of the towns in this part of Lombardy: He himſelf lives in a private manner, with very little appearance of a court about him; he has one of the nobleſt collections of paintings in the world, which entertained us extremely well the reſt of that day and a part of the next; and in the afternoon we came to Bologna: So now you may wiſh us joy of being in the dominions of his Holineſs. This is a populous city, and of great extent: All the ſtreets have porticoes on both ſides, ſuch as ſurround a part of Covent-Garden, a great relief in ſummer-time in ſuch a climate; and from one of the principal gates to a church of the Virgin, [where is a wonder-working picture, at three miles diſtance] runs a corridore of the ſame ſort, lately finiſhed, and

and indeed a moſt extraordinary performance. The churches here are more remarkable for their painting than architecture, being moſtly old ſtructures of brick; but the palaces are numerous, and fine enough to ſupply us with ſomething worth ſeeing from morning till night. The country of Lombardy, hitherto, is one of the moſt beautiful imaginable; the roads broad, and exactly ſtraight, and on either hand vaſt plantations of trees, chiefly mulberries and olives, and not a tree without a vine twining about it and ſpreading among its branches.—This ſcene, indeed, which muſt be the moſt lovely in the world during the proper ſeaſon, is at preſent all deformed by the winter, which here is rigorous enough for the time it laſts; but one ſtill ſees the ſkeleton of a charming place, and reaps the benefit of its product, for the fruits and proviſions are admirable; in ſhort, you find every thing, that luxury can deſire, in perfection. We have now been here a week, and ſhall ſtay ſome little time longer. We are at the foot of the Appennine mountains; it will take up three days to croſs them, and then we ſhall come to Florence, where we ſhall paſs the Chriſtmas. Till then we muſt remain in a ſtate of ignorance as to what is doing in England, for our letters are to meet us there: If I do not find four or five from you alone, I ſhall wonder.

LET-

LETTER XIV.

Mr. GRAY to his MOTHER.

Florence, Dec. 19, *N. S.* 1729.

WE ſpent twelve days at Bologna, chiefly (as moſt travellers do) in ſeeing ſights; for as we knew no mortal there, and as it is no eaſy matter to get admiſſion into any Italian houſe, without very particular recommendations, we could ſee no company but in publick places; and there are none in that city but the churches. We ſaw therefore, churches, palaces, and pictures from morning to night; and on the 15th of this month ſet out for Florence, and began to croſs the Apennine mountains; we travelled among and upon them all that day, and as it was but indifferent weather, were commonly in the middle of thick clouds, that utterly deprived us of a ſight of their beauties: For this vaſt chain of hills has its beauties, and all the vallies are cultivated; even the mountains themſelves are many of them ſo, within a little of their very tops. They are not ſo horrid as the Alps, tho' pretty near as high; and the whole road is admirably well kept, and paved throughout, which

which is a length of fourſcore miles and more. We left the Pope's dominions, and lay that night in thoſe of the Grand Duke at Fiorenzuola, a paltry little town, at the foot of Mount Giogo, which is the higheſt of them all. Next morning we went up to it; the poſt-houſe is open upon its very top, and uſually involved in clouds, or half-buried in the ſnow. Indeed there was none of the laſt at the time we were there, but it was ſtill a diſmal habitation. The deſcent is moſt exceſſively ſteep, and the turnings very ſhort and frequent; however we performed it without any danger, and in coming down could dimly diſcover Florence, and the beautiful plain about it, through the miſts; but enough to convince us, it muſt be one of the nobleſt proſpects upon earth in ſummer. That afternoon we got thither; and Mr. Mann *, the reſident, had ſent his ſervant to meet us at the gates, and conduct us to his houſe. He is the beſt and moſt obliging perſon in the world. The next night we were introduced at the Prince of Craon's aſſembly (he has the chief power here in the Grand Duke's abſence.) The Princeſs, and he, were extremely civil to the name of Walpole, ſo we were aſked to ſtay ſupper, which is as much as to ſay, you

* Now Sir Horace Mann, and Envoy Extraordinary at the ſame court.

may

may come and ſup here whenever you pleaſe; for after the firſt invitation this is always underſtood. We have alſo been at the Counteſs Suarez's, a favourite of the late Duke, and one that gives the firſt movement to every thing gay that is going forward here. The news is every day expected from Vienna of the Grand Dutcheſs's delivery; if it be a boy, here will be all ſorts of balls, maſquerades, operas, and illuminations; if not, we muſt wait for the Carnival, when all thoſe things come of courſe. In the mean time it is impoſſible to want entertainment; the famous gallery, alone, is an amuſement for months; we commonly paſs two or three hours every morning in it, and one has perfect leiſure to conſider all its beauties. You know it contains many hundred antique ſtatues, ſuch as the whole world cannot match, beſides the vaſt collections of paintings, medals, and precious ſtones, ſuch as no other prince was ever maſter of; in ſhort, all that the rich and powerful houſe of Medicis has in ſo many years got together. * And beſides this city abounds with ſo many palaces and churches, that you can hardly place yourſelf any where without having ſome fine one in view, or at leaſt ſome ſtatue or fountain, magnificently

* He catalogued and made occaſional ſhort remarks on the pictures, &c. which he ſaw here, as well as at other places; many of which are in my poſſeſſion, but it would have ſwelled this work too much if I had inſerted them.

adorned;

adorned; theſe, undoubtedly, are far more numerous than Genoa can pretend to; yet, in its general appearance, I cannot think that Florence equals it in beauty. Mr. Walpole is juſt come from being preſented to the Electreſs Palatine Dowager; ſhe is a ſiſter of the late Great Duke's; a ſtately old lady, that never goes out but to church, and then ſhe has guards, and eight horſes to her coach. She received him with much ceremony, ſtanding under a huge black canopy, and, after a few minutes talking, ſhe aſſured him of her good will, and diſmiſſed him: She never ſees any body but thus in form; and ſo ſhe paſſes her life, † poor woman! * * *

LETTER XV.

Mr. GRAY to Mr. WEST.

Florence, Jan. 15, 1740.

I Think I have not yet told you how we left that charming place Genoa: How we croſſed a mountain, all of green marble, called Buchetto: How we came to Tortona, and waded through the mud to come to Caſtle St. Giovanni, and there eat muſtard and ſugar with

† Perſons of very high rank, and withal very good ſenſe, will only feel the pathos of this exclamation.

a diſh

a diſh of crows gizzards: Secondly how we paſſed the famous plains

Quà Trebia glaucas ſalices interſecat undâ
  Arvaque Romanis nobilitata malis.
Viſus adhuc amnis veteri de clade rubere,
  Et ſuſpirantes ducere mæſtus aquas;
Maurorumque ala, & nigræ increbreſcere turmæ,
  Et pulſa Auſonidum ripa ſonare fugâ.

Nor, thirdly, how we paſſed through Piacenza, Parma, Modena, entered the territories of the Pope; ſtayed twelve days at Bologna; croſſed the Appennines, and afterwards arrived at Florence. None of theſe things have I told you, nor do I intend to tell you, till you aſk me ſome queſtions concerning them. No not even of Florence itſelf, except that it is as fine as poſſible, and has every thing in it that can bleſs the eyes. But, before I enter into particulars, you muſt make your peace both with me and the Venus de Medicis, who, let me tell you, is highly and juſtly offended at you, for not inquiring, long before this, concerning her ſymmetry and proportions. * * *

LET-

LETTER XVI.

Mr. WEST to Mr. GRAY.

ELEGIA. *

ERGO deſidiæ videor tibi crimine dignus;
Et meritò: victas do tibi ſponte manus.
Arguor & veteres nimium contemnere Muſas,
Irata et nobis eſt Medicæa Venus.
Mene igitur ſtatuas & inania ſaxa vereri!
Stultule! marmoreâ quid mihi cum Venere?
Hìc veræ, hìc vivæ Veneres, & mille per urbem,
Quarum nulla queat non placuiſſe Jovi.
Cedite Romanæ formoſæ et cedite Graiæ,
Sintque oblita Helenæ nomen et Hermionæ!
Et, quaſcunque refert ætas vetus, Heroinæ:
Unus honor noſtris jam venit Angliaſin.
Oh quales vultus, Oh quantum numen ocellis!
I nunc & Tuſcas improbe confer opes.
Ne tamen hæc obtuſa nimis præcordia credas,
Neu me adeo nullâ Pallade progenitum:
Teſtor Pieridumque umbras & flumina Pindi
Me quoque Calliopes ſemper amaſſe choros;
Et dudum Auſonias urbes, & viſere Graias
Cura eſt, ingenio ſi licet ire meo:
Sive eſt Phidiacum marmor, ſeu Mentoris æra,
Seu paries Coo nobilis e calamo;
Nec minus artificum magna argumenta recentûm

* The letter which accompanied this little elegy is not extant. Probably it was only incloſed in one to Mr. Walpole.

Ro-

Romanique decus nominis & Veneti:
Quà Furor & Mavors & ſævo in Marmore vultus,
Quaque et formoſo mollior ære Venus.
Quàque loquax ſpirat fucus, vivique labores,
Et quicquid calamo dulciùs auſa manus:
Hìc nemora, & ſola mærens Melibœus in umbrâ,
Lymphaque muſcoſo proſiliens lapide;
Illìc majus opus, facieſque in pariete major
Exurgens, Divûm & numina Cœlicolûm;
O vos fælices, quibus hæc cognoſcere fas eſt,
Et totâ Italiâ, qua patet uſque, frui!
Nulla dies vobis eat injucunda, nec uſquam
Norîtis quid ſit tempora amara pati.

LETTER XVII.

Mr. GRAY to his MOTHER.

Florence, March 19, 1740.

THE Pope* is at laſt dead, and we are to ſet out for Rome on Monday next. The Conclave is ſtill ſitting there, and likely to continue ſo ſome time longer, as the two French Cardinals are but juſt arrived, and the German ones are ſtill expected. It agrees mighty ill with thoſe that remain incloſed: Ottoboni is already dead of an apoplexy; Altieri and ſeveral others are ſaid to be dy-

* Clement the twelfth.

ing,

ing, or very bad: Yet it is not expected to break up till after Eaſter. We ſhall lie at Sienna the firſt night, ſpend a day there, and in two more get to Rome. One begins to ſee in this country the firſt promiſes of an Italian ſpring, clear unclouded ſkies, and warm ſuns, ſuch as are not often felt in England; yet, for your ſake, I hope at preſent you have your proportion of them, and that all your froſts, and ſnows, and ſhort-breaths are, by this time, utterly vaniſhed. I have nothing new or particular to inform you of; and, if you ſee things at home go on much in their old courſe, you muſt not imagine them more various abroad. The diverſions of a Florentine Lent are compoſed of a ſermon in the morning, full of hell and the devil; a dinner at noon, full of fiſh and meagre diet; and, in the evening, what is called a Converſazione, a ſort of aſſembly at the principal people's houſes, full of I cannot tell what: Beſides this, there is twice a week a very grand concert. * * *

LETTER XVIII.

Mr. GRAY to his MOTHER.

Rome, April 2, N. S. 1740.

THIS is the third day ſince we came to Rome, but the firſt hour I have had to write to you in. The journey from Florence

coſt

coſt us four days, one of which was ſpent at Sienna, an agreeable, clean, old city, of no great magnificence, or extent; but in a fine ſituation, and good air. What it has moſt conſiderable is its cathedral, a huge pile of marble, black and white laid alternately, and laboured with a gothic niceneſs and delicacy in the old-faſhioned way. Within too are ſome paintings and ſculpture of conſiderable hands. The ſight of this, and ſome collections that were ſhowed us in private houſes, were a ſufficient employment for the little time we were to paſs there; and the next morning we ſet forward on our journey through a country very oddly compoſed; for ſome miles you have a continual ſcene of little mountains cultivated from top to bottom with rows of olive-trees, or elſe elms, each of which has its vine twining about it and mixing, with the branches; and corn ſown between all the ranks. This diverſified with numerous ſmall houſes and convents, makes the moſt agreeable proſpect in the world: But all of a ſudden, it alters to black barren hills, as far as the eye can reach, that ſeem never to have been capable of culture, and are as ugly as uſeleſs. Such is the country for ſome time before one comes to Mount Radicofani, a terrible black hill, on the top of which we are to lodge that night. It is very high, and difficult of aſcent; and at the foot

foot of it, we were much embarraſſed by the fall of one of the poor horſes that drew us. This accident obliged another chaiſe, which was coming down, to ſtop alſo; and out of it peeped a figure in a red cloak, with a handkerchief tied round its head, which by its voice and mien, ſeemed a fat old woman; but, upon its getting out, appeared to be Seneſino, who was returning, from Naples to Sienna, the place of his birth and reſidence. On the higheſt part of the mountain is an old fortreſs, and near it a houſe built by one of the Grand Dukes for a hunting-ſeat, but now converted into an inn: It is the ſhell of a large fabric, but ſuch an inſide, ſuch chambers, and accommodations, that your cellar is a palace in compariſon; and your cat ſups and lies much better than we did; for, it being a ſaint's eve, there were nothing but eggs. We devoured our meagre fare; and, after ſtopping up the windows with the quilts, were obliged to lie upon ſtraw beds in our cloths. Such are the conveniences in a road, that is, as it were, the great thoroughfare of all the world. Juſt on the other ſide of this mountain, at Ponte-Centino, one enters the patrimony of the church; a moſt delicious country, but thinly inhabited. That night brought us to Viterbo, a city of a more lively appearance than any we had lately met with; the houſes have glaſs windows, which

which is not very uſual here, and moſt of the ſtreets are terminated by a handſome fountain. Here we had the pleaſure of breaking our faſt on the leg of an old hare and ſome broiled crows. Next morning, in deſcending Mount Viterbo, we firſt diſcovered (though at near thirty miles diſtance) the cupola of St. Peter's, and a little after began to enter on an old Roman pavement, with now and then a ruined tower, or a ſepulchre on each hand. We now had a clear view of the city, though not to the beſt advantage, as coming along a plain quite upon a level with it; however, it appeared very vaſt, and ſurrounded with magnificent villas and gardens. We ſoon after croſſed the Tiber, a river that ancient Rome made more conſiderable than any merit of its own could have done: However, it is not contemptibly ſmall, but a good handſome ſtream; very deep, yet ſomewhat of a muddy complexion. The firſt entrance of Rome is prodigiouſly ſtriking. It is by a noble gate, deſigned by Michael Angelo, and adorned with ſtatues; this brings you into a large ſquare, in the midſt of which is a vaſt obeliſk of granite, and in front you have at one view two churches of a handſome architecture, and ſo much alike, that they are called the twins, with three ſtreets, the middlemoſt of which is one of the longeſt in Rome. As high as my expectation was raiſed,

I con-

I confeſs, the magnificence of this city infinitely ſurpaſſes it. You cannot paſs along a ſtreet but you have views of ſome palace or church, or ſquare, or fountain, the moſt pictureſque and noble one can imagine. We have not yet ſet about conſidering its beauties, ancient and modern, with attention; but have already taken a ſlight tranſient view of ſome of the moſt remarkable. St. Peter's I ſaw the day after we arrived, and was ſtruck dumb with wonder. I there ſaw the Cardinal de Auvergne, one of the French ones, who, upon coming off his journey, immediately repaired hither to offer up his vows at the high altar, and went directly into the Conclave; the doors of which we ſaw opened to him, and all the other immured Cardinals came hither to receive him. Upon his entrance they were cloſed again directly. It is ſuppoſed they will not come to an agreement about a Pope till after Eaſter, though the confinement is very diſagreeable. I have hardly philoſophy enough to ſee the infinity of fine things, that are here daily in the power of any body that has money, without regretting the want of it; but cuſtom has the power of making things eaſy to one. I have not yet ſeen his majeſty of Great Britain, &c. though I have the two boys in the gardens of the Villa Borgeſe, where they go a ſhooting almoſt every day; it was at a diſ-

tance, indeed, for we did not chooſe to meet them, as you may imagine. This letter (like all thoſe the Engliſh ſend, or receive) will paſs through the hand of that family, before it comes to thoſe it was intended for. They do it more honour than it deſerves; and all they will learn from thence will be, that I deſire you to give my duty to my father, and wherever elſe it is due, and that I am, &c.

LETTER XIX.

Mr. GRAY to his MOTHER.

Rome, April 15, 1740, *Good-Friday.*

TO-DAY I am juſt coming from paying my adoration at St. Peter's to three extraordinary reliques, which are expoſed to public view only on theſe two days in the whole year, at which time all the confraternities in the city come in proceſſion to ſee them. It was ſomething extremely novel to ſee that vaſt church, and the moſt magnificent in the world, undoubtedly, illuminated (for it was night) by thouſands of little cryſtal lamps, diſpoſed in the figure of an huge croſs at the high altar, and ſeeming to hang alone in the air. All the light proceeded from this, and had the moſt ſingular effect imaginable as one entered

entered the great door. Soon after came one after another, I believe, thirty proceſſions, all dreſſed in linen frocks, and girt with a cord, their heads covered with a cowl all over, only two holes to ſee through left. Some of them were all black, others red, others white, others party coloured; theſe were continually coming and going with their tapers and crucifixes before them; and to each company, as they arrived and knelt before the great altar, were ſhown from a balcony at a great height the three wonders, which are, you muſt know, the head of the ſpear that wounded Chriſt, St. Veronica's handkerchief, with the miraculous impreſſion of his face upon it; and a piece of the true croſs, on the ſight of which, the people thump their breaſts and kiſs the pavement with vaſt devotion. The tragical part of the ceremony is half a dozen wretched creatures, who with their faces covered, but naked to the waiſt, are in a ſide chapel diſciplining themſelves with ſcourges full of iron prickles; but really in earneſt, as our eyes can teſtify, which ſaw their backs and arms ſo raw, that we ſhould have taken it for a red ſattin double torn, and ſhewing the ſkin through, had we not been convinced of the contrary by the blood which was plentifully ſprinkled about them. It is late; I give you joy of Porto Bello, and many other things, which I hope are all true. * * *

LETTER XX.

Mr. GRAY to Mr. WEST.

Tivoli, May 20, 1740.

THIS day being in the palace of his Highneſs the Duke of Modena, he laid his moſt ſerene commands upon me to write to Mr. Weſt, and ſaid he thought it for his glory, that I ſhould draw up an inventory of all his moſt ſerene poſſeſſions for the ſaid Weſt's peruſal.—Imprimis, an houſe, being in circumference a quarter of a mile, two feet and an inch; the ſaid houſe containing the following particulars, to wit, a great room. Item, another great room; item a bigger room; item another room; item a vaſt room; item a ſixth of the ſame; a ſeventh ditto; an eight as before; a ninth as aboveſaid; a tenth (ſee No. 1;) item, ten more ſuch, beſides twenty beſides, which, not to be too particular, we ſhall paſs over. The ſaid rooms containing nine chairs, two tables, five ſtools, and a cricket. From whence we ſhall proceed to the garden, containing two millions of ſuperfine laurel hedges, a clump of cypreſs trees, and half the river Teverone, that piſſes into two thouſand ſeveral chamber pots. Finis—Dame Nature deſired me to put in a liſt of her little goods and chattles, and, as they were ſmall, to be very minute

minute about them. She has built here three or four little mountains, and laid them out in an irregular ſemi-circle; from certain others behind, at a greater diſtance, ſhe has drawn a canal, into which ſhe has put a little river of her's called Anio; ſhe has cut a huge cleft between the two innermoſt of her four hills, and there ſhe has left it to its own diſpoſal; which ſhe has no ſooner done, but, like a heedleſs chit, it tumbles headlong down a declivity fifty feet perpendicular, breaks itſelf all to ſhatters, and is converted into a ſhower of rain, where the ſun forms many a bow, red, green, blue and yellow. To get out of our metaphors without any further trouble, it is the moſt noble ſight in the world. The weight of that quantity of waters, and the force they fall with, have worn the rocks they throw themſelves among, into a thouſand irregular craggs, and to a vaſt depth. In this channel it goes boiling along with a mighty noiſe till it comes to another ſteep, where you ſee it a ſecond time coming roaring down (but firſt you muſt walk two miles farther) a greater height than before, but not with that quantity of waters; for by this time it has divided itſelf, being croſſed and oppoſed by the rocks, into four ſeveral ſtreams, each of which, in emulation of the great one, will tumble down too, and it does tumble down, but not from an equally elevat-

ed place; ſo that you have, at one view, all theſe caſcades intermixed with groves of olive and little woods, the mountains riſing behind them, and on the top of one (that which forms the extremity of one of the half-circle's horns) is ſeated the town itſelf. At the very extremity of that extremity, on the brink of the precipice, ſtands the Sybils' temple, the remains of a little rotunda, ſurrounded with its portico, above half of whoſe beautiful Corinthian pillars are ſtill ſtanding and entire, all this on one hand. On the other, the open Campagna of Rome, here and there a little caſtle on a hillock, and the city itſelf on the very brink of the horizon, indiſtinctly ſeen (being eighteen miles off) except the dome of St. Peter's; which, if you look out of your window, wherever you are, I ſuppoſe you can ſee. I did not tell you that a little below the firſt fall, on the ſide of the rock, and hanging over that torrent, are little ruins which they ſhow you for Horace's houſe, a curious ſituation to obſerve the

"Præceps Anio, & Tiburni lucus, & uda
"Mobilibus pomaria rivis."

Mæcenas did not care for ſuch noiſe, it ſeems, and built him a houſe (which they alſo carry one to ſee) ſo ſituated that it ſees nothing at all of the matter, and for any thing he knew there might be no ſuch river in the world.

Horace

Horace had another houſe on the other ſide of the Teverone, oppoſite to Mæcenas's; and they told us there was a bridge of communication, by which *andava il detto Signor per traſtullarſi coll iſteſſo Orazio.* In coming hither we croſſed the Aquæ Albulæ, a vile little brook that ſtinks like a fury, and they ſay it has ſtunk ſo theſe thouſand years. I forgot the Piſcina of Quintilius Varus, where he uſed to keep fiſhes. This is very entire, and there is a piece of the aqueduct that ſupplied it too; in the garden below is old Rome, built in little, juſt as it was, they ſay. There are ſeven temples in it, and no houſes at all: They ſay there were none.

May 21.

We have had the pleaſure of going twelve miles out of our way to Paleſtrina. It has rained all day as if heaven and us were coming together. See my honeſty, I do not mention a ſyllable of the temple of Fortune, becauſe I really did not ſee it; which, I think, is pretty well for an old traveller. So we returned along the Via Prænestina, ſaw the Lacus Gabinus and Regillus, where you know, Caſtor and Pollux appeared upon a certain occaſion. And many a good old tomb we left on each hand, and many an Aqueduct,

Dumb are whoſe fountains, and their channels dry.

There are, indeed, two whole modern ones, works of Popes, that run about thirty miles a-piece in length; one of them conveys ſtill the famous Aqua Virgo to Rome, and adds vaſt beauty to the proſpect. So we came to Rome again, where waited for us a ſplendiſſimo regalo of letters; in one of which came You, with your huge characters and wide intervals, ſtaring. I would have you to know, I expect you ſhould take a handſome crow-quill when you write to me, and not leave room for a pin's point in four ſides of a ſheet royal. Do you but find matter, I will find ſpectacles.

I have more time than I thought, and I will employ it in telling you about a Ball that we were at the other evening. Figure to yourſelf a Roman villa; all its little apartments thrown open, and lighted up to the beſt advantage. At the upper end of the gallery, a fine concert, in which La Diamantina, a famous virtuoſa, played on the violin divinely, and ſung angelically; Giovannino and Paſqualini (great names in muſical ſtory) alſo performed miraculouſly. On each ſide were ranged all the ſecular grand monde of Rome, the Ambaſſadors, Princeſſes, and all that. Among the reſt Il Sereniſſimo Pretendente (as the Mantova gazette calls him) diſplayed his rueful length of perſon, with his two young ones, and

and all his miniſtry around him. *Poi naque un grazioſo ballo*, where the world danced, and I ſat in a corner regaling myſelf with iced fruits, and other pleaſant rinfreſcatives.

LETTER XXI.

Mr. GRAY to Mr. WEST.

Rome, May, 1740.

MATER roſarum, cui teneræ vigent
Auræ Favonî, cui Venus it comes
Laſciva, Nympharum choreis
Et volucrum celebrata cantu!
Dic non inertem fallere quâ diem
Amat ſub umbrâ, ſeu ſinit aureum
Dormire plectrum, ſeu retentat
Pierio * Zephyrinus antro
Furore dulci plenus, & immemor
Reptantis inter frigora Tuſculi
Umbroſa, vel colles Amici
Palladiæ ſuperantis Albæ.
Dilecta Fauno, & capripedum choris
Pineta, teſtor vos, Anio minax
Quæcunque per clivos volutus
Præcipiti tremefecit amne,
Illius altum Tibur, & Æſulæ
Audiſſe ſylvas nomen amabiles,

* He entitled this charming ode "Ad C. Favonium Zephyrinum," and writ it immediately after his journey to Freſcati and the caſcades of Tivoli, which he deſcribes in the preceding letter.

Illius & gratas Latinis
Naiaſin ingeminâſſe rupes:
Nam me Latinæ Naiades uvidâ
Vidêre ripâ, quà niveas levi
Tam ſæpe lavit rore plumas
Dulcè canens Venuſinus ales;
Mirum! canenti conticuit nemus,
Sacrique fontes, et retinent adhuc
(Sic Muſa juſſit) ſaxa molles
Docta modos, vetereſque lauri.
Mirare nec tu me citharæ rudem
Claudis laborantem numeris: loca
Amæna, jucundumque ver in-
-compoſitum docuere carmen;
Hærent ſub omni nam folio nigri
Phœbea lucî (credite) ſomnia,
Argutiuſque et lympha et auræ
Neſcio quid ſolito loquuntur.

I am to day juſt returned from Alba, a good deal fatigued; for you know the Appian is ſomewhat tireſome. *We dined at Pompey's; he indeed was gone for a few days to his Tuſculan, but, by the care of his Villicus, we made an admirable meal. We had the

* However whimſical this humour may appear to ſome readers, I choſe to inſert it, as it gives me an opportunity of remarking that Mr. Gray was extremely ſkilled in the cuſtoms of the ancient Romans; and has catalogued, in his common-place book, their various eatables, wines, perfumes, cloaths, medicines, &c. with great preciſion, referring under every article to paſſages in the Poets and Hiſtorians where their names are mentioned.

dugs

dugs of a pregnant ſow, a peacock, a diſh of thruſhes, a noble ſcarus juſt freſh from the Tyrrhene, and ſome conchylia of the Lake with garum ſauce: For my part I never eat better at Lucullus's table. We drank half a dozen cyathi a-piece of ancient Alban to Pholoë's health; and, after bathing, and playing an hour at ball, we mounted our eſſedum again, and proceeded up the mount to the temple. The prieſts there entertained us with an account of a wonderful ſhower of birds eggs, that had fallen two days before, which had no ſooner touched the ground, but they were converted into gudgeons; as alſo that the night paſt a dreadful voice had been heard out of the Adytum, which ſpoke Greek during a full half hour, but no body underſtood it. But quitting my Romanities, to your great joy and mine, let me tell you, in plain Engliſh, that we come from Albano. The preſent town lies within the incloſure of Pompey's Villa in ruins. The Appian way runs through it, by the ſide of which, a little farther, is a large old tomb with five pyramids upon it, which the learned ſuppoſe to be the burying-place of the family, becauſe they do not know whoſe it can be elſe. But the vulgar aſſure you it is the ſepulchre of the Curiatii, and by that name (ſuch is their power) it goes. One drives to Caſtle Gondolfo, a houſe of the

Pope's

Pope's, ſituated on the top of one of the Collinette, that forms a brim to the baſon, commonly called the Alban lake. It is ſeven miles round; and directly oppoſite to you, on the other ſide, riſes the Mons Albanus, much taller than the reſt, along whoſe ſide are ſtill diſcoverable (not to common eyes) certain little ruins of the old Alba longa. They had need be very little, as having been nothing but ruins ever ſince the days of Tullus Hoſtilius. On its top is a houſe of the Conſtable Collonna's, where ſtood the temple of Jupiter Latialis. At the foot of the hill Gondolfo, are the famous outlets of the lake, built, with hewn ſtone, a mile and an half under ground. Livy, you know, amply informs us of the fooliſh occaſion of this expenſe, and gives me this opportunity of diſplaying all my erudition, that I may appear conſiderable in your eyes. This is the proſpect from one window of the palace. From another you have the whole Campagna, the City Antium, and the Tyrrhene ſea (twelve miles diſtant) ſo diſtinguiſhable, that you may ſee the veſſels ſailing up on it. All this is charming. Mr. Walpole ſays, our memory ſees more than our eyes in this country. Which is extremely true; ſince for realities, Windſor, or Richmond-Hill, is infinitely preferable to Albano or Freſcati. I am now at home, and going to the window to tell you it is the moſt

moſt beautiful of Italian nights, which, are but juſt begun (ſo backward has the ſpring been here, and every where elſe, they ſay.) There is a moon! there are ſtars for you! Do not you hear the fountain? Do not you ſmell the orange flowers? That building yonder is the Convent of S. Iſidore; and that eminence, with the cyprus trees and pines upon it, the top of M. Quirinal. This is all true, and yet my proſpect is not two hundred yards in length. —We ſend you ſome Roman inſcriptions to entertain you. The firſt two are modern, tranſcribed from the Vatican library by Mr. Walpole.

Pontifices olim quem fundavere priores,
Præcipuâ Sixtus perficit arte tholum; *
Et Sixti tantum ſe gloria tollit in altum,
Quantum ſe Sixti nobile tollit opus:
Magnus honos magni fundamina ponere templi,
Sed finem cœptis ponere major honos.
Saxa agit Amphion, Thebana ut mœnia condat:
Sixtus & immenſæ pondera molis agit. †
Saxa trahunt ambo longè diverſa: ſed arte
Hæc trahit Amphion; Sixtus & arte trahit.
At tantum exſuperat Dircæum Amphiona Sixtus,
Quantum hic exſuperat cætera ſaxa lapis.

* Sixtus V. built the dome of St. Peter's.
† He raiſed the obeliſk in the great area.

Mine

Mine is ancient, and I think not leſs curious. It is exactly tranſcribed from a ſepulchral marble at the villa Giuſtiniani. I put ſtops to it, when I underſtand it.

Dis Manibus
Claudiæ, Piſtes
Primus Conjugi
Optumae, Sanctæ,
Et Piae, Benemeritae.

Non æquos, Parcae, ſtatuiſtis ſtamina vitæ,
Tam bene compoſitos potuiſtis ſede tenere,
Amiſſa eſt conjux, cur ego & ipſe moror?
Si · bella · eſſe · mî · iſte · mea · vivere · debuit ·
Triſtia contigerunt qui amiſſâ conjuge vivo.
Nil eſt tam miſerum, quam totam perdere vitam.
Nec vita enaſci dura peregiſtis crudelia penſa ſorores,
Ruptaque deficiunt in primo munere fuſi.
O nimis injuſtæ ter denos dare munus in annos,
Deceptus · grautus · fatum · ſic · preſſit · egeſtas ·
Dum vitam tulero, Primus Piſtes lugeo conjugium.

LETTER XXII.

Mr. GRAY to his MOTHER.

Naples, June 17, 1740.

OUR journey hither was through the moſt beautiful part of the fineſt country in the world; and every ſpot of it, on ſome account or other, famous for theſe three thouſand

ſand years paſt *. The ſeaſon has hitherto been juſt as warm as one would wiſh it; no unwholeſome airs, or violent heats, yet heard of: The people call it a backward year, and are in pain about their corn, wine, and oil; but we who are neither corn, wine, nor oil, find it very agreeable. Our road was through Velletri, Ciſterna, Terracina, Capua, and Averſa, and ſo to Naples. The minute one leaves his Holineſs's dominions, the face of things begins to change from wide uncultivated plains, to olive groves and well-tilled fields of corn, intermixed with ranks of elms, every one of which has its vine twining about it, and hanging in feſtoons between the rows from one tree to another. The great old fig-trees, the oranges in full bloom, and myrtles in every hedge, make one of the delightfulleſt ſcenes you can conceive; beſides that, the roads are wide, well-kept, and full of paſſengers, a ſight I have not beheld this long time. My wonder ſtill increaſed upon entering the city, which I think, for number of people, outdoes both Paris and Lon-

* Mr. Gray writ a minute deſcription of every thing he ſaw in this tour from Rome to Naples; as alſo of the environs of Rome, Florence, &c. But as theſe papers are apparently only memorandums for his own uſe, I do not think it neceſſary to print them, although they abound with many uncommon remarks, and pertinent claſſical quotations. The reader will pleaſe to obſerve throughout this ſection, that it is not my intention to give him Mr. Gray's Travels, but only extracts from the Letters which he writ during his travels.

don. The ſtreets are one continued market, and thronged with populace ſo much that a coach can hardly paſs. The common ſort are a jolly lively kind of animals, more induſtrious than Italians uſually are; they work till evening; then they take their lute or guitar (for they all play) and walk about the city, or upon the ſea-ſhore with it, to enjoy the freſco. One ſees their little brown children jumping about ſtark-naked, and the bigger ones dancing with caſtanets, while others play on the cymbal to them. Your maps will ſhow you the ſituation of Naples; it is on the moſt lovely bay in the world, and one of the calmeſt ſeas: It has many other beauties beſides thoſe of Nature. We have ſpent two days in viſiting the remarkable places in the country round it, ſuch as the bay of Baiæ, and its remains of antiquity; the lake Avernus, and the Solfatara, Charon's grotto, &c. We have been in the Sybils' cave and many other ſtrange holes under ground (I only name them, becauſe you may conſult Sandys's travels;) but the ſtrangeſt hole I ever was in, has been to-day at a place called Portici, where his Sicilian Majeſty has a country-ſeat. About a year ago, as they were digging, they diſcovered ſome parts of ancient buildings about thirty feet deep in the ground: Curioſity led them on, and they have been digging ever ſince; the paſſage they have made,

made, with all its turnings and windings, is now more than a mile long. As you walk, you ſee parts of an amphitheatre, many houſes adorned with marble columns, and incruſted with the ſame; the front of a temple, ſeveral arched vaults of rooms painted in freſco. Some pieces of painting have been taken out from hence, finer than any thing of the kind before diſcovered, and with theſe the King has adorned his palace; alſo a number of ſtatues, medals and gems; and more are dug out every day. This is known to be a Roman town *, that in the Emperor Titus's time was overwhelmed by a furious eruption of Mount Veſuvius, which is hard by. The wood and beams remain ſo perfect that you may ſee the grain; but burnt to a coal, and dropping into duſt upon the leaſt touch. We were to-day at the foot of that mountain, which at preſent only ſmokes a little, where we ſaw the materials that fed the ſtream of fire, which about four years ſince ran down its ſide. We have but a few days longer to ſtay here: too little in conſcience for ſuch a place. * * *

* It ſhould ſeem by the omiſſion of its name, that it was not then diſcovered to be Herculaneum.

LET-

LETTER XXIII.

Mr. GRAY to his FATHER.

Florence, July 16, 1740.

AT my return to this city, the day before yeſterday, I had the pleaſure of finding your's dated June the 9th. The period of our voyages, at leaſt towards the ſouth, is come, as you wiſh. We have been at Naples, ſpent nine or ten days there, and returned to Rome, where finding no likelihood of a Pope yet theſe three months, and quite wearied with the formal aſſemblies, and little ſociety of that great city, Mr. Walpole determined to return hither to ſpend the ſummer, where he imagines he ſhall paſs his time more agreeably than in the tedious expectation of what, when it happens, will only be a great ſhow. For my own part, I give up the thoughts of all that with but little regret; but the city itſelf I do not part with ſo eaſily, which alone has amuſements for whole years. However, I have paſſed through all that moſt people do, both ancient and modern; what that is you may ſee, better than I can tell you, in a thouſand books. The Conclave we left in greater uncertainty than ever; the more than ordinary liberty they enjoy there, and the unuſual coolneſs of the ſeaſon, makes the confinement leſs diſagreeable to them than common, and, conſequently maintains them in their irreſolution

ſolution. There have been very high words, one or two (it is ſaid) have come even to blows; two more are dead within this laſt month, Cenci and Portia; the latter died diſtracted; and we left another (Altieri) at the extremity: Yet nobody dreams of an election till the latter end of Sept. All this gives great ſcandal to all good Catholicks, and every body talks very freely on the ſubject. The Pretender (whom you deſire an account of) I have had frequent opportunities of ſeeing at church, at the Corſo, and other places; but more particularly, and that for a whole night, at a great ball given by Count Patrizii to the Prince and Princeſs Craon, (who were come to Rome at that time, that he might receive from the hands of the Emperor's miniſter there the order of the Golden Fleece) at which time he and his two ſons were preſent. They are good fine boys, eſpecially the younger, who has the more ſpirit of the two, and both danced inceſſantly all the night long. For him, he is a thin ill-made man, extremely tall and awkward, of a moſt unpromiſing countenance, a good deal reſembling King James the Second, and has extremely the air and look of an idiot, particularly when he laughs or prays. The firſt he does not often, the latter continually. He lives private enough, with his little court about him, conſiſting of Lord Dunbar, who manages every thing, and two or three of the Preſton

Scotch

Scotch Lords, who would be very glad to make their peace at home.

We happened to be at Naples on Corpus Chriſti Day, the greateſt feaſt in the year, ſo had an opportunity of ſeeing their Sicilian Majeſties to advantage. The King walked in the grand proceſſion, and the Queen (being big with child) ſat in a balcony. He followed the Hoſt to the church of St. Clara, where high maſs was celebrated to a glorious concert of muſic. They are as ugly a little pair as one can ſee: She a pale girl, marked with the ſmall-pox; and he a brown boy with a thin face, a huge noſe, and as ungainly as poſſible.

We are ſettled here with Mr. Mann in a charming apartment: the river Arno runs under our windows, which we can fiſh out of. The ſky is ſo ſerene, and the air ſo temperate, that one continues in the open air all night long in a ſlight night-gown, without any danger; and the marble bridge is the reſort of every body, where they hear muſic, eat iced fruits, and ſup by moon-light; though as yet (the ſeaſon being extremely backward every where) theſe amuſements are not begun. You ſee we are now coming northwards again, though in no great haſte; the Venetian and Milaneſe territories, and either Germany or the South of France (according to the turn the war may take) are all that remain for us, that we have not yet ſeen;

as to Loretto and that part of Italy, we have given over all thoughts of it.

LETTER XXIV.

Mr. WEST to Mr. GRAY.

Bond-ſtreet, June 5, 1740.

I Lived at the Temple till I was ſick of it: I have juſt left it, and find myſelf as much a lawyer as I was when I was in it. It is certain, at leaſt, I may ſtudy the law here as well as I could there. My being in chambers did not ſignify to me a pinch of ſnuff. They tell me my father was a lawyer, and, as you know, eminent in the profeſſion; and ſuch a circumſtance muſt be of advantage to me. My uncle too makes ſome figure in Weſtminſter-hall; and there's another advantage: Then my grandfather's name would get me many friends. Is it not ſtrange that a young fellow, that might enter the world with ſo many advantages, will not know his own intereſt? &c. &c. What ſhall I ſay in anſwer to all this? For money, I neither doat upon it nor deſpiſe it; it is a neceſſary ſtuff enough. For ambition, I do not want that neither; but it is not to ſit upon a bench. In ſhort, is it not a diſagreeable thing to force one's inclination, eſpecially when one's young? Not to mention that one ought to have the ſtrength of

of a Hercules to go through our common law; which I am afraid, I have not. Well! but then, ſay they, if one profeſſion does not ſuit you, you may chuſe another more to your inclination. Now I proteſt I do not yet know my own inclination, and I believe, if that was to be my direction, I ſhould never fix at all: There is no going by a weather-cock. I could ſay much more upon this ſubject; but there is no talking tête-à-tête croſs the Alps. O the folly of young men, that never know their own intereſt! they never grow wiſe till they are ruined! and then nobody pities them, nor helps them. Dear Gray! conſider me in the condition of one that has lived theſe two years without any perſon that he can freely ſpeak to. I know it is very ſeldom that people trouble themſelves with the ſentiments of thoſe they converſe with; ſo they can chat about trifles, they never care whether your heart aches or no. Are you one of theſe? I think not. But what right have I to aſk you this queſtion? Have we known one another enough, that I ſhould expect or demand ſincerity from you? Yes, Gray, I hope we have; and I have not quite ſuch a mean opinion of myſelf, as to think I do not deſerve it. — But, Signor, is it not time for me to aſk ſomething about your further intentions abroad? Where do you propoſe going next? *An in Apuliam? nam illò ſi adveneris, tanquam*

quam Ulyſſes, cognoſces tuorum neminem: Vale. So Cicero propheſies in the end of one of his letters * — and there I end.

Your's, &c.

LETTER XXV.

Mr. GRAY to Mr. WEST.

Florence, July 16, 1740.

YOU do yourſelf and me juſtice, in imagining that you merit, and that I am capable of ſincerity. I have not a thought, or even a weakneſs, I deſire to conceal from you; and conſequently on my ſide deſerve to be treated with the ſame openneſs of heart. My vanity, perhaps, might make me more reſerved towards you, if you were one of the heroic race, ſuperior to all human failings; but as mutual wants are the ties of general ſociety, ſo are mutual weakneſſes of private friendſhips, ſuppoſing them mixed with ſome proportion of good qualities; for where one may not ſometimes blame, one does not much care ever to praiſe. All this has

* This letter (written apparently in much agitation of mind, which Mr. Weſt endeavours to conceal by an unuſual careleſſneſs of manner) is chiefly inſerted to introduce the anſwer to it; which appears to me to be replete with delicate feeling, manly ſenſe, and epiſtolary eaſe. If the Reader ſhould not think as highly of it as I do, let me remind him that the writer was not now quite four-and-twenty years old.

the

the air of an introduction designed to soften a very harsh reproof that is to follow; but it is no such matter: I only meant to ask, Why did you change your lodging? Was the air bad, or the situation melancholy? If so, you are quite right. Only, is it not putting yourself a little out of the way of a people, with whom it seems necessary to keep up some sort of intercourse and conversation, though but little for your pleasure or entertainment, (yet there are, I believe, such among them as might give you both) at least for your information in that study which, when I left you, you thought of applying to? for that there is a study necessary to be followed, if we mean to be of any use in the world, I take for granted; disagreeable enough, (as most necessities are) but, I am afraid, unavoidable. Into how many branches these studies are divided in England, every body knows; and between that which you and I had pitched upon and the other two, it was impossible to balance long. Examples shew one that it is not absolutely necessary to be a blockhead to succeed in this profession. The labour is long, and the elements dry and unentertaining; nor was ever any body (especially those that afterwards made a figure in it) amused, or even not disgusted in the beginning; yet, upon further acquaintance, there is surely matter for curiosity and reflection. It is strange, if, among all that huge

huge maſs of words, there be not ſomewhat intermixed for thought. Laws have been the reſult of long deliberation, and that not of dull men, but the contrary; and have ſo cloſe a connection with hiſtory, nay, with philoſophy itſelf, that they muſt partake a little of what they are related to ſo nearly. Beſides, tell me, Have you ever made the attempt? Was not you frighted merely with the diſtant proſpect? Had the Gothic character and bulkineſs of thoſe volumes (a tenth part of which it will be no further neceſſary to conſult, than as one does a dictionary) no ill effect upon your eye? Are you ſure, if Coke had been printed by Elzevir, and bound in twenty neat pocket volumes, inſtead of one folio, you ſhould never have taken him up for an hour, as you would a Tully, or drank your tea over him? I know how great an obſtacle ill ſpirits are to reſolution. Do you really think, if you rid ten miles every morning, in a week's time you ſhould not entertain much ſtronger hopes of the Chancellorſhip, and think it a much more probable thing than you do at preſent? The advantages you mention are not nothing; our inclinations are more than we imagine in our own power; reaſon and reſolution determine them, and ſupport under many difficulties. To me there hardly appears to be any medium between a public life and a private one; he who prefers

the firſt, muſt put himſelf in a way of being ſerviceable to the reſt of mankind, if he has a mind to be of any conſequence among them: Nay, he muſt not refuſe being in a certain degree even dependent upon ſome men who already are ſo. If he has the good fortune to light on ſuch as will make no ill uſe of his humility, there is no ſhame in this: If not, his ambition ought to give place to a reaſonable pride, and he ſhould apply to the cultivation of his own mind thoſe abilities which he has not been permitted to uſe for others' ſervice. Such a private happineſs (ſuppoſing a ſmall competence of fortune) is almoſt always in one's power, and the proper enjoyment of age, as the other is the employment of youth. You are yet young, have ſome advantages and opportunities, and an undoubted capacity, which you have never yet put to the trial. Set apart a few hours, ſee how the firſt year will agree with you, at the end of it you are ſtill the maſter; if you change your mind, you will only have got the knowledge of a little ſomewhat that can do no hurt, or give you cauſe of repentance. If your inclinations be not fixed upon any thing elſe, it is a ſymptom that you are not abſolutely determined againſt this, and warns you not to miſtake mere indolence for inability. I am ſenſible there is nothing ſtronger againſt what I would

would perſuade you to, than my own practice; which may make you imagine I think not as I ſpeak. Alas! it is not ſo; but I do not act what I think, and I had rather be the object of your pity, than that you ſhould be that of mine; and, be aſſured, the advantage I may receive from it, does not diminiſh my concern in hearing you want ſome-body to converſe with freely, whoſe advice might be of more weight, and always at hand. We have ſome time ſince come to the ſouthern period of our voyages; we ſpent about nine days at Naples. It is the largeſt and moſt populous city, as its environs are the moſt deliciouſly fertile country, of all Italy. We ſailed in the bay of Baiæ, ſweated in the Solfatara, and died in the grotto del Cane, as all ſtrangers do; ſaw the Corpus Chriſti proceſſion, and the King and the Queen, and the city under-ground, (which is a wonder I reſerve to tell you of another time) and ſo returned to Rome for another fortnight; left it (left Rome!) and came hither for the ſummer. You have ſeen * an Epiſtle to Mr. Aſhton, that ſeems to me full of ſpirit and thought, and a good deal of poetic fire. I would know your opinion.—Now I talk of verſes, Mr. Walpole and I have

* The reader will find this in Dodſley's Miſcellany, and alſo amongſt Mr. Walpole's Fugitive Pieces.

frequently wondered you ſhould never mention a certain imitation of Spencer, publiſhed laſt year by a † nameſake of yours, with which we are all enraptured and enmarvailed.

LETTER XXVI.

Mr. GRAY to his MOTHER.

Florence, Aug. 21, N. S. 1740.

IT is ſome time ſince I have had the pleaſure of writing to you, having been upon a little excurſion croſs the mountains to Bologna. We ſet out from hence at ſunſet, paſſed the Apennines by moon-light, travelling inceſſantly till we came to Bologna at four in the afternoon next day. There we ſpent a week agreeably enough, and returned as we came. The day before yeſterday arrived the news of a Pope; and I have the mortification of being within four days journey of Rome, and not ſeeing his coronation, the heats being violent, and the infectious air now at its height. We had an inſtance, the other day, that it is not only fancy. Two country fellows, ſtrong men, and uſed to the country about Rome, having occaſion to come from thence hither,

† Gilbert Weſt, Eſq; This poem "On the abuſe of Travelling" is alſo in Dodſley's Miſcellany.

and

and travelling on foot, as common with them, one died ſuddenly on the road; the other got hither, but extremely weak, and in a manner ſtupid; he was carried to the hoſpital, but died in two days. So, between fear and lazineſs, we remain here, and muſt be ſatisfied with the accounts other people give us of the matter. The new Pope is called Benedict XIV. being created Cardinal by Benedict XIII. the laſt Pope but one. His name is Lambertini, a noble Bologneſe, and archbiſhop of that city. When I was firſt there I remember to have ſeen him two or three times; he is a ſhort, fat man, about ſixty-five years of age, of a hearty, merry countenance, and likely to live ſome years. He bears a good character for generoſity, affability, and other virtues; and, they ſay, wants neither knowledge nor capacity. The worſt ſide of him is, that he has a nephew or two; beſides a certain young favorite, called Melara, who is ſaid to have had, for ſome time, the arbitrary diſpoſal of his purſe and family. He is reported to have made a little ſpeech to the Cardinals in the Conclave, while they were undetermined about an election, as follows: "Moſt eminent Lords, here "are three Bologneſe of different characters, "but all equally proper for the popedom. "If it be your pleaſures, to pitch upon a ſaint, "there is Cardinal Gotti; if upon a Politician,

" there is Aldrovandi; if upon a Booby, here " am I." The Italian is much more expreſſive, and, indeed, not to be tranſlated; wherefore, if you meet with any body that underſtands it, you may ſhow them what he ſaid in the language he ſpoke it. " Eminſſimi. Sigri. " Oi ſiamo tré, diverſi sì, mà tutti idonei al " Papato. Se vi piace un Santo, c' è l'Gotti; ſe volete una teſta ſcaltra, e Politica, c' è l'Al- " drovandé; ſe un Coglione, eccomi!" Cardinal Coſcia is reſtored to his liberty, and, it is ſaid, will be to all his benefices. Corſini (the late Pope's nephew) as he has no hand in this election, it is hoped, will be called to account for all his villainous practices. The Pretender, they ſay, has reſigned all his pretenſions to his eldeſt boy, and will accept of the Grand Chancellorſhip, which is thirty thouſand crowns a-year; the penſion he has at preſent is only twenty thouſand. I do not affirm the truth of this laſt article; becauſe, if he does, it is neceſſary he ſhould take the eccleſiaſtical habit, and it will ſound mighty odd to be called his Majeſty the Chancellor.—So ends my Gazette.

LET-

LETTER XXVII.

Mr. GRAY to Mr. WEST.

Florence, Sept. 25, N. S. 1740.

WHAT I ſend you now, as long as it is, is but a piece of a poem. It has the advantage of all fragments, to need neither introduction nor concluſion: Beſides, if you do not like it, it is but imagining that which went before, and came after, to be infinitely better. Look in Sandys's travels for the hiſtory of Monte Barbaro, and Monte Nuovo. *

* * * * *

Nec procul infelix ſe tollit in æthera Gaurus,
Proſpiciens vitreum lugenti vertice pontum:
Triſtior ille diu, & veteri deſuetus olivâ
Gaurus, pampineæque eheu jam neſcius umbræ;
Horrendi tam ſæva premit vicinia montis,
Attonitumque urget latus, exuritque ferentem.

Nam

* To ſave the reader trouble, I here inſert the paſſage referred to.—"Weſt of Cicero's Villa ſtands the eminent Gaurus, a ſtony and deſolate mountain, in which there are diverſe obſcure caverns, choaked almoſt with earth, where many have conſumed much fruitleſs induſtry in ſearching for treaſure. The famous Lucrine Lake extended formerly from Avernus to the aforeſaid Gaurus: But is now no other than a little ſedgy plaſh, choaked up by the horrible and aſtoniſhing eruption of the new mountain; whereof, as oft as I think, I am eaſy to credit whatſoever is wonderful.

Nam fama eſt olim, mediâ dum rura ſilebant
Nocte, Deo victa, & molli perfuſa quiete,
Infremuiſſe æquor ponti, auditamque per omnes
Latè tellurem ſurdùm immugire cavernas:
Quo ſonitu nemora alta tremunt; tremit excita tuto
Parthenopæa ſinu, flammantiſque ora Veſevi.
At ſubitò ſe aperire ſolum, vaſtoſque receſſus
Pandere ſub pedibus, nigrâque voragine fauces;
Tum piceas cinerum glomerare ſub æthere nubes

For who here knows not, or who elſewhere will believe, that a mountain ſhould ariſe, (partly out of a lake and partly out of the ſea) in one day and a night, unto ſuch a height as to contend in altitude with the high mountains adjoining? In the year of our Lord 1538, on the 29th of September, when for certain days foregoing, the country hereabout was ſo vexed with perpetual earthquakes, as no one houſe was left ſo entire as not to expect an immediate ruin; after that the ſea had retired two hundred paces from the ſhore, (leaving abundance of fiſh, and ſprings of freſh water riſing in the bottom) this mountain viſibly aſcended, about the ſecond hour of the night, with an hideous roaring, horribly vomiting ſtones and ſuch ſtore of cinders as overwhelmed all the buildings thereabout, and the ſalubrious baths of Tripergula, for ſo many ages celebrated; conſumed the vines to aſhes, killing birds and beaſts: the fearful inhabitants of Puzzol flying through the dark with their wives and children; naked, defiled, crying out, and deteſting their calamities. Manifold miſchiefs have they ſuffered by the barbarous, yet none like this which Nature inflicted.——This new mountain, when newly raiſed, had a number of iſſues; at ſome of them ſmoaking and flaming; and others diſgorging rivulets of hot waters; keeping within a terrible rumbling; and many miſerably periſhed that ventured to deſcend into the hollowneſs above. But that hollow on the top is at preſent an orchard, and the mountain throughout is bereft of his terrors."

Sandys's Travels, book 4, pages 275, 277 and 278.

Vor-

Vorticibus rapidis, ardentique imbre procellam.
Præcipites fugere feræ, perque avia longè
Sylvarum fugit paſtor, juga per deſerta,
Ah, miſer! increpitans ſæpè altâ voce per umbram
Nequicquam natos, creditque audire ſequentes
Atque ille excelſo rupis de vertice ſolus
Reſpectans notaſque domos, & dulcia regna,
Nil uſquàm videt infelix præter mare triſti
Lumine percuſſum, & pallentes ſulphure campos,
Fumumque, flammaſque, rotataque turbine ſaxa.

Quin ubi detonuit fragor, & lux reddita cœlo;
Mæſtos confluere agricolas, paſſuque videres
Tandem iterum timido deſerta requirere tecta:
Sperantes, ſi forte oculis, ſi forte darentur
Uxorum cineres, miſerorumve oſſa parentum;
(Tenuia, ſed tanti ſaltem ſolatia luctus)

Unà colligere & juſtâ componere in urnâ.
Uxorum nuſquam cineres, nuſquam oſſa parentum
(Spem miſeram!) aſſuetoſve Lares, aut rura videbunt.
Quippe ubi planities campi diffuſa jacebat;
Mons novus: ille ſupercilium, frontemque favillâ
Incanum oſtentans, ambuſtis cautibus, æquor
Subjectum, ſtragemque ſuam, mæſta arva, minaci
Deſpicit imperio, ſoloque in littore regnat.

Hinc infame loci nomen, multoſque per annos,
Immemor antiquæ laudis, neſcire labores
Vomeris, & nullo tellus revireſcere cultu.

Non avium colles, non carmine matutino
Paſtorum reſonare; adeò undique dirus habebat
Informes latè horror agros ſaltuſque vacantes.
Sæpius et longè detorquens navita proram
Monſtrabat digito littus, ſævæque revolvens
Funera narrabat noctis, veteremque ruinam.

Montis adhuc facies manet hirta atque aſpera ſaxis:
Sed furor extinctus jamdudum, & flamma quievit,
Quæ naſcenti aderat; ſeu fortè bitumimis atri
Defluxere olim rivi, atque efferta lacuna
Pabula ſufficere ardori, vireſque recuſat;
Sive in viſceribus meditans incendia jam nunc
(Horrendùm) arcanis glomerat genti eſſe futuræ
Exitio, ſparſos tacituſque recolligit ignes.

Raro per clivos haud ſecius ordine vidi
Caneſcentem oleam: longum poſt tempus amicti
Vite virent tumuli; patriamque reviſere gaudens
Bacchus in aſſuetis tenerum caput exerit arvis
Vix tandem, infidoque audet ſe credere cœlo.

There was a certain little ode * ſet out from Rome, in a letter of recommendation to you, but poſſibly fell into the enemies' hands, for I never heard of its arrival. It is a little impertinent to inquire after its welfare; but you, that are a father, will excuſe a parent's fooliſh fondneſs. Laſt poſt I received a very diminutive letter: It made excuſes for its unentertain-

* The Alcaic Ode inſerted in Letter XXI.

ingneſs,

ingneſs, very little to the purpoſe; ſince it aſſured me, very ſtrongly, of your eſteem, which is to me the thing; all the reſt appear but as the *petits agrémens* the garniſhing of the diſh. P. Bougeant, in his *Langage des Bêtes*, fancies that your birds, who continually repeat the ſame note, ſay only in plain terms, "Je vous aime, ma chere; ma chere, je vous aime;" and that thoſe of greater genius indeed, with various trills, run diviſions upon the ſubject; but that the *ſond*, from whence it all proceeds, is "toujours je vous aime." Now you may, as you find yourſelf dull or in humour, either take me for a chaffinch or nightingale; ſing your plain ſong, or ſhow your ſkill in muſic, but in the bottom let there be, toujours, toujours de l'Amitié.

As to what you call my ſerious letter; be aſſured, that your future eſtate is to me entirely indifferent. Do not be angry, but hear me; I mean with reſpect to myſelf. For whether you be at the top of Fame, or entirely unknown to mankind; at the Council-table, or at Dick's coffee-houſe; ſick and ſimple, or well and wiſe; whatever alteration mere accident works in you, (ſuppoſing it utterly impoſſible for it to make any change in your ſincerity and honeſty, ſince theſe are conditions *ſine quâ non*) I do not ſee any likelihood of my not being your's ever.

LET-

LETTER XXVIII.

Mr. GRAY to his FATHER.

Florence, *Oct.* 9, 1740.

THE beginning of next ſpring is the time determined for our return at furtheſt; poſſibly it may be before that time. How the interim will be employed, or what route we ſhall take, is not ſo certain. If we remain friends with France, upon leaving this country we ſhall croſs over to Venice, and ſo return through the cities north of the Po to Genoa; from thence take a felucca to Marſeilles, and come back through Paris. If the contrary fall out, which ſeems not unlikely, we muſt make the Milaneſe, and thoſe parts of Italy, in our way to Venice; from thence paſs through the Tirol into Germany, and come home by the Low-Countries. As for Florence, it has been gayer than ordinary for this laſt month, being one round of balls and entertainments, occaſioned by the arrival of a great Milaneſe lady; for the only thing the Italians ſhine in, is their reception of ſtrangers. At ſuch times every thing is magnificence: The more remarkable, as in their ordinary courſe of life they are parſimonious, even to a degree of naſtineſs. I ſaw in one of the vaſteſt palaces in Rome (that of Prince Pamfilio) the apartment which he himſelf inhabited, a bed

bed that moſt ſervants in England would diſdain to lie in, and furniture much like that of a ſoph at Cambridge, for convenience and neatneſs. This man is worth 30,000l. ſterling a year. As for eating, there are not two Cardinals in Rome that allow more than ſix paoli, which is three ſhillings, a day, for the expence of their table; and you may imagine they are ſtill leſs extravagant here than there. But when they receive a viſit from any friend, their houſes and perſons are ſet out to the greateſt advantage, and appear in all their ſplendour; it is, indeed, from a motive of vanity, and with the hopes of having it repaid them with intereſt, whenever they have occaſion to return the viſit. The new Pope has retrenched the charges of his own table to a ſequin (10s.) a meal. The applauſe which all he ſays and does meets with, is enough to encourage him really to deſerve fame. They ſay he is an able and honeſt man; he is reckoned a wit too. The other day, when the Senator of Rome came to wait upon him, at the firſt compliments he made him, the Pope pulled off his cap: His Maſter of the Ceremonies, ſtood by his ſide, touched him ſoftly, as to warn him that ſuch a condeſcenſion was too great in him, and out of all manner of rule: Upon which he turned to him and ſaid, "Oh! I cry "you mercy, good Maſter; it is true I am but "a novice of a Pope; I have not yet ſo much "as learned ill manners * * *."

LET-

LETTER XXIX.

Mr GRAY to his FATHER.

Florence, Jan. 12 *, 1741.

WE ſtill continue conſtant at Florence, at preſent one of the dulleſt cities in Italy. Though it is the middle of the Carnival, there are no publick diverſions; nor is maſquerading permitted as yet. The Emperor's obſequies are to be celebrated publickly the 16th of this month; and after that, it is imagined, every thing will go on in its uſual courſe. In the mean time, to employ the minds of the populace, the Government has thought fit to bring into the city in a ſolemn manner, and at a great expence, a famous ſtatue of the Virgin called the Madonna dell' Impruneta, from the place of her reſidence, which is upon a mountain ſeven miles off. It never has been practiſed but at times of public calamity; and was done at preſent to avert the ill effects of a late great inundation, which it was feared might cauſe ſome epidemical diſtemper. It was introduced a fortnight ago in proceſſion, attended by the Council of Regency, the Senate, the Nobility, and all

* Between the date of this and the foregoing letter the reader will perceive an interval of full three months: As Mr. Gray ſaw no new places during this period, his letters were chiefly of news and common occurrences, and are therefore omitted.

the

the Religious Orders, on foot and bare-headed, and ſo carried to the great church, where it was frequented by an infinite concourſe of people from all the country round. Among the reſt I paid my devotions almoſt every day, and ſaw numbers of people poſſeſſed with the Devil, who were brought to be exorciſed. It was indeed in the evening, and the church-doors were always ſhut before the ceremonies were finiſhed, ſo that I could not be eye-witneſs of the event; but that they were all cured is certain, for one never heard any more of them the next morning. I am to-night juſt returned from ſeeing our Lady make her exit with the ſame ſolemnities ſhe entered. The ſhow had a finer effect than before, for it was dark; and every body (even thoſe of the mob that could afford it) bore a white-wax flambeau. I believe there were at leaſt five thouſand of them, and the march was near three hours in paſſing before the window. The ſubject of all this devotion is ſuppoſed to be a large Tile with a rude figure in bas-relief upon it. I ſay ſuppoſed, becauſe ſince the time it was found (for it was found in the earth in ploughing) only two people have ſeen it; the one was, by good-luck, a ſaint; the other was ſtruck blind for his preſumption. Ever ſince ſhe has been covered with ſeven veils; nevertheleſs, thoſe who approach her tabernacle caſt their eyes down for fear they ſhould

ſhould ſpy her through all her veils. Such is the hiſtory, as I had it from the lady of the houſe where I ſtood to ſee her paſs; with many other circumſtances; all which ſhe firmly believes, and ten thouſand beſide.

We ſhall go to Venice in about ſix weeks, or ſooner. A number of German troops are upon their march into this State, in caſe the King of Naples thinks proper to attack it. It is certain he has aſked the Pope's leave for his troops to paſs through his country. The Tuſcans in general are much diſcontented, and fooliſh enough to wiſh for a Spaniſh government, or any rather than this * * *.

LETTER XXX.

Mr. GRAY to Mr. WEST.

Florence, April 21, 1741.

I Know not what degree of ſatisfaction it will give you to be told that we ſhall ſet out from hence the 24th of this month, and not ſtop above a fortnight at any place in our way. This I feel; that you are the principal pleaſure I have to hope for in my own country. Try at leaſt to make me imagine myſelf not indifferent to you; for I muſt own I have the vanity of deſiring to be eſteemed by ſomebody, and would chooſe that ſomebody ſhould be one whom I eſteem

eſteem as much as I do you. As I am recommending myſelf to your love, methinks I ought to ſend you my picture, for I am no more what I was, (ſome circumſtances excepted, which I hope I need not particularize to you): You muſt add, then, to your former idea, two years of age, a reaſonable quantity of dulneſs, a great deal of ſilence, and ſomething that rather reſembles, than is, thinking; a confuſed notion of many ſtrange and fine things that have ſwum before my eyes for ſome time, a want of love for general ſociety, indeed an inability to it. On the good ſide you may add a ſenſibility for what others feel, and indulgence for their faults or weakneſſes, a love of truth, and deteſtation of every thing elſe. Then you are to deduct a little impertinence, a little laughter, a great deal of pride, and ſome ſpirits. Theſe are all the alterations I know of; you, perhaps, may find more. Think not that I have been obliged for this reformation of manners to reaſon or reflection, but to a ſeverer ſchool-miſtreſs, Experience. One has little merit in learning her leſſons, for one cannot well help it; but they are more uſeful than others, and imprint themſelves in the very heart. I find I have been haranguing in the ſtyle of the Son of Sirach, ſo ſhall finiſh here, and tell you that our route is ſettled as follows: Firſt to Bologna for a few days, to hear the Viſcontina ſing; next to Reggio, where

where is a Fair. Now, you muſt know, a Fair here is not a place where one eats gingerbread or rides upon hobby-horſes; here are no muſical clocks, nor tall Leiceſterſhire women; one has nothing but maſking, gaming, and ſinging. If you love operas, there will be the moſt ſplendid in Italy, four tip-top voices, a new theatre, the Duke and Dutcheſs in all their pomps and vanities. Does not this ſound magnificent? Yet is the city of Reggio but one ſtep above Old Brentford. Well; next to Venice by the 11th of May, there to ſee the old Doge wed the Adriatic Whore. Then to Verona, ſo to Milan, ſo to Marſeilles, ſo to Lyons, ſo to Paris, ſo to Weſt, &c. *in ſæcula ſæculorum. Amen.*

Eleven months, at different times, have I paſſed at Florence; and yet (God help me) know not either people or language. Yet the place and the charming proſpects demand a poetical farewell, and here it is.

* * * Oh Fæſulæ amæna
Frigoribus juga, nec nimiùm ſpirantibus auris!
Alma quibus Tuſci Pallas decus Apennini
Eſſe dedit, glaucâque ſuâ caneſcere ſylvâ!
Non ego vos poſthàc Arni de valle videbo
Porticibus circum, & candenti cincta coronâ
Villarum longè nitido conſurgere dorſo,
Antiquamve Ædem, & veteres præferre Cupreſſus
Mirabor, tectiſque ſuper pendentia tecta.

I will ſend you, too, a pretty little Sonnet of a Signor Abbate Buondelmonte, with my imitation of it.

Speſſo Amor ſotto la forma
D'amiſtà ride e s'aſconde:
Poi ſi miſchia, e ſi confonde
Con lo ſdegno, e col rancor.
In Pietade ei ſi trasforma;
Par traſtullo, e par diſpetto:
Mà nel ſuo diverſo aſpetto
Sempr'egli è liſteſſo Amor.

Luſit amicitiæ interdum velatus amictu,
Et bené compoſita veſte feſellit Amor.
Mox iræ aſſumſit cultus, faciemque minantem,
Inque odium verſus, verſus & in lacrymas:
Ludentem fuge, nec lacrymanti, aut crede fu-
Idem eſt diſſimili ſemper in ore Deus. [renti;

Here comes a letter from you.—I muſt defer giving my opinion of Pauſanias * till I can ſee the whole, and only have ſaid what I did in obedience to your commands. I have ſpoken with ſuch freedom on this head, that it ſeems but juſt you ſhould have your revenge; and therefore I ſend you the beginning not of an Epic Poem, but of a Metaphyſic † one. Poems and Meta-

* Some part of a Tragedy under that title, which Mr. Weſt had begun; but I do not find amongſt Mr. Gray's papers either the ſketch itſelf or Mr. Gray's free critique upon it, which he here mentions.

† The beginning of the firſt book of a didactic Poem, "De Principiis Cogitandi." The fragment which he now ſent, contained the firſt 53 lines. The reader will find a further account of his deſign, and all that he finiſhed of the Poem, in a ſubſequent ſection.

phyſics

phyſics (ſay you, with your ſpectacles on) are inconſiſtent things. A metaphyſical poem is a contradiction in terms. It is true, but I will go on. It is Latin too, to increaſe the abſurdity. It will, I ſuppoſe, put you in mind of the man who wrote a treatiſe of Canon Law in Hexameters. Pray help me to the deſcription of a mixt mode, and a little Epiſode about Space.

* * * * *

Mr. Walpole and Mr. Gray ſet out from Florence at the time ſpecified in the foregoing letter. When Mr. Gray left Venice, which he did in the middle of July following, he returned home through Padua, Verona, Milan, Turin, and Lyons. From all which places he writ either to his Father or Mother with great punctuality: But merely to inform them of his health and ſafety; about which (as might be expected) they were now very anxious, as he travelled with only a *Laquais du Voyage*. Theſe letters do not even mention that he went out of of his way to make a ſecond viſit to the Grande Chartreuſe*, and there wrote in the Album of the Fathers the following Alcaic Ode §, with which I conclude this Section.

ODE

* He was at Turin the 15th of Auguſt, and began to croſs the Alps the next day. On the 25th he reached Lyons; therefore it muſt have been between theſe two dates that he made this viſit.

§ We ſaw in the 8th and 11th letters how much Mr Gray was ſtruck with the awful ſcenery which ſurrounds the Chartreuſe

O D E.

Oh Tu, ſeveri Religio loci,
Quocunque gaudes nomine (non leve
  Nativa nam certè fluenta
    Numen habet, vetereſque ſylvas ;
Præſentiorem & conſpicimus Deum
Per invias rupes, fera per juga,
  Clivoſque præruptos ſonantes
    Inter aquas, nemorumque noctem ;
Quàm ſi repòſtus ſub trabe citreâ
Fulgeret auro, & Phidiacâ manu,
  Salve vocanti ritè, feſſo et
    Da placidam juveni quietem.
Quòd ſi invidendis ſedibus, & frui
Fortuna ſacrâ legi ſilentii
  Vetat volentem, me reſorbens
    In medios violenta fluctus :
Saltem remoto des, Pater, angulo
Horas ſenectæ ducere liberas ;
  Tutumque vulgari tumultu
    Surripias, hominumque curis.

END OF THE SECOND SECTION.

treuſe, at a time his mind muſt have been in a far more tranquil ſtate than when he wrote this excellent Ode. It is marked, I think, with all the fineſt touches of his melancholy Muſe, and flows with ſuch an originality of expreſſion, that one can hardly forbear lamenting he did not honour his own language by making it the vehicle of this noble imagery and pathetic ſentiment.

SECTION THE THIRD.

WHEN Mr. Gray returned from abroad, he found his father's conſtitution almoſt worn out by the very ſevere attacks of the gout, to which he had been for many years ſubject; and indeed the next return of that diſtemper was fatal to him. This happened about two months after his ſon reached London *.

It has been before obſerved, that Mr. Philip Gray was of a reſerved and indolent temper; he was alſo moroſe, unſocial, and obſtinate; defects which, if not inherent in his diſpoſition, might probably ariſe from his bodily complaints. His indolence had led him to neglect the buſineſs of his profeſſion †; his obſtinacy to build a country-houſe at Wanſtead, without acquainting either his wife or ſon with the deſign (to which he knew they would be very averſe) till

* He came to town about the 1ſt of September, 1741. His Father died the 6th of November following, at the age of ſixty-five.

† His buſineſs was that which, at the time, was called a Money-Scrivener; and it may not be amiſs to mention, for the ſingularity of the thing; that Milton's father was of the ſame profeſſion: But he alſo had "muſic in his ſoul," and was eſteemed a conſiderable maſter in that ſcience. Some of his compoſitions are extant in Old Wilby's Set of Airs, and in Ravenſcroft's Pſalms. The great Poet alludes finely both to the muſical genius and trade of his father, in thoſe beautiful hexameters, "Ad Patrem," which are inſerted amongſt his Latin Poems.

it

it was executed. This building which he undertook late in life, was attended with very conſiderable expence; which might almoſt be called ſo much money thrown away: ſince, after his death, the houſe was obliged to be ſold for two thouſand pounds leſs than its original coſt. Mr. Gray, therefore, at this time found his patrimony ſo ſmall, that it would by no means enable him to proſecute the ſtudy of the law, without his becoming burthenſome to his Mother and Aunt. Theſe two ſiſters had for many years carried on a trade * ſeparate from that of Mrs. Gray's huſband; by which, having acquired what would ſupport them decently for the reſt of their lives, they left off buſineſs ſoon after his death, and retired to Stoke, near Windſor, to the houſe of their other ſiſter, Mrs. Rogers, lately become the widow of a gentleman of the law of that name. Both of them wiſhed Mr. Gray to follow the profeſſion for which he had been originally intended, and would undoubtedly have contributed all in their power to enable him to do it with eaſe and conveniency. He on his part, though he had taken his reſolution of declining it, was too delicate to hurt two perſons for whom he had ſo tender an affection, by peremptorily declaring his real intentions; and

* They kept a kind of India ware-houſe on Cornhill under the joint names of Gray and Antrobus.

therefore

therefore changed, or pretended to change, the line of that ſtudy; and, accordingly, the latter end of the ſubſequent year went to Cambridge to take his Bachelor's degree in Civil Law.

But the narrowneſs of his circumſtances was not the only thing that diſtreſſed him at this period. He had, as we have ſeen, loſt the friendſhip of Mr. Walpole abroad. He had alſo loſt much time in his travels; a loſs which application could not eaſily retrieve, when ſo ſevere and laborious a ſtudy as that of the Common Law was to be the object of it; and he well knew that, whatever improvement he might have made in this interval, either in taſte or ſcience, ſuch improvement would ſtand him in little ſtead with regard to his preſent ſituation and exigencies. This was not all: His other friend, Mr. Weſt, he found, on his return, oppreſſed by ſickneſs and a load of family misfortunes; which, were I fully acquainted with them, it would not be my inclination here to dwell upon. Theſe the ſympathizing heart of Mr. Gray made his own. He did all in his power (for he was now with him in London) to ſoothe the ſorrows of his friend, and try to alleviate them by every office of the pureſt and moſt perfect affection: But his cares were vain. The diſtreſſes of Mr. Weſt's mind had already too far affected a body, from the firſt weak and delicate.

His

His health declined daily, and therefore he left town in March 1742, and, for the benefit of the air, went to David Mitchell's, Eſq; at Popes, near Hatfield, Hertfordſhire; at whoſe houſe he died the 1ſt of June following.

It is from this place, and from the former date, that this third ſeries of letters commences.

LETTER I*.

Mr. WEST to Mr. GRAY.

I Write to make you write, for I have not much to tell you. I have recovered no ſpirits, as yet; but, as I am not diſpleaſed with my company, I ſit purring by the fire-ſide in my arm-chair with no ſmall ſatisfaction. I read too ſometimes, and have begun Tacitus, but have not yet read enough to judge of him; only his Pannonian ſedition in the firſt book of his annals, which is juſt as far as I have got, ſeemed to me a little tedious. I have no more to ſay, but to deſire you will write letters of a handſome length, and always anſwer me within a a reaſonable ſpace of time, which I leave to your diſcretion.

Popes, March 28, 1742.

P. S. The new Dunciad! *qu'en penſez vous?*

* This letter is inſerted as introductory only to the anſwer which follows.

LETTER II.

Mr. GRAY to Mr. WEST.

I Truſt to the country, and that eaſy indolence you ſay you enjoy there, to reſtore you your health and ſpirits; and doubt not but, when the ſun grows warm enough to tempt you from your fire-ſide, you will (like all other things) be the better for his influence. He is my old friend, and an excellent nurſe, I aſſure you. Had it not been for him, life had often been to me intolerable. Pray do not imagine that Tacitus, of all authors in the world, can be tedious. An annaliſt, you know, is by no means maſter of his ſubject; and I think one may venture to ſay, that if theſe Pannonian affairs are tedious in his hands, in another's they would have been inſupportable. However, fear not, they will ſoon be over, and he will make ample amends. A man, who could join the *brilliant* of wit and conciſe ſententiouſneſs peculiar to that age, with the truth and gravity of better times, and the deep reflection and good ſenſe of the beſt moderns, cannot chooſe but have ſomething to ſtrike you. Yet what I admire in him above all this, is his deteſtation of tyranny, and the high ſpirit of liberty that every now and then breaks out, as it were, whether he would or no. I remember a ſentence in his Agricola

Agricola that (conciſe as it is) I always admired, for ſaying much in a little compaſs. He ſpeaks of Domitian, who, upon ſeeing the laſt will of that General, where he had made him coheir with his wife and daughter, " Satis conſtabat " lætatum eum, velut honore, judicioque : tam " cæca & corrupta mens aſſiduis adulationibus " erat, ut neſciret a bono patre non ſcribi hæ- " redem, niſi malum principem."

As to the Dunciad it is greatly admired: The Genii of Operas and Schools, with their attendants, the pleas of the Virtuoſos and Floriſts, and the yawn of Dulneſs in the end, are as fine as any thing he has written. The Metaphyſicians' part is to me the worſt; and here and there are a few ill-expreſſed lines, and ſome hardly intelligible.

I take the liberty of ſending you a long ſpeech of Agrippina; much too long, but I could be glad you would retrench it. Aceronia, you may remember, had been giving quiet counſels. I fancy, if it ever be finiſhed, it will be in the nature of Nat. Lee's Bedlam Tragedy, which had twenty-five acts and ſome odd ſcenes.

* * * * *

The ſpeech herewith ſent to Mr. Weſt was the concluding one of the firſt ſcene of a tragedy, which I believe was begun the preceding winter. The Britannicus of M. Racine, I

know was one of Mr. Gray's moſt favourite plays; and the admirable manner in which I have heard him ſay that he ſaw it repreſented at Paris, ſeems to have led him to chooſe the death of Agrippina for this his firſt and only effort in the drama. The execution of it alſo, as far as it goes, is ſo very much in Racine's taſte, that I ſuſpect if that great poet had been born an Engliſhman, he would have written preciſely in the ſame ſtyle and manner. However, as there is at preſent in this nation a general prejudice againſt declamatory plays, I agree with a learned friend, who peruſed the manuſcript, that this fragment will be little reliſhed by the many; yet the admirable ſtrokes of nature and character with which it abounds, and the majeſty of its diction, prevent me from withholding from the few, who I expect will reliſh it, ſo great a curioſity (to call it nothing more) as a part of a tragedy written by Mr. Gray. Theſe perſons well know, that till ſtyle and ſentiment be a little more regarded, mere action and paſſion will never ſecure reputation to the Author, whatever they may do to the Actor. It is the buſineſs of the one "to ſtrut and fret his hour upon the ſtage;" and if he frets and ſtruts enough, he is ſure to find his reward in the plaudit of an upper gallery; but the other ought to have ſome regard to the cooler judgment of the cloſet: For I will be bold to ſay, that

that if Shakeſpeare himſelf had not written a multitude of paſſages which pleaſe there as much as they do on the ſtage, his reputation would not ſtand ſo univerſally high as it does at preſent. Many of theſe paſſages, to the ſhame of our theatrical taſte, are omitted conſtantly in the repreſentation: But I ſay not this from conviction that the mode of writing, which Mr. Gray purſued, is the beſt for dramatic purpoſes. I think myſelf, what I have aſſerted elſewhere *, that a medium between the French and Engliſh taſte would be preferable to either; and yet this medium, if hit with the greateſt nicety, would fail of ſucceſs on our theatre, and that for a very obvious reaſon. Actors (I ſpeak of the whole body collectively) muſt all learn to ſpeak as well as to act, in order to do juſtice to ſuch a drama.

But let me haſten to give the reader what little inſight I can into Mr. Gray's plan, as I find, and ſelect it from two detached papers. The title and Dramatis Perſonæ are as follow:

* See Letters prefixed to Elfrida, particularly Letter II.

AGRIPPINA, a TRAGEDY.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

AGRIPPINA, the Empreſs Mother.
NERO, the Emperor.
POPPÆA, believed to be in love with OTHO.
OTHO, a young man of quality, in love with POPPÆA.
SENECA, the Emperor's Preceptor.
ANICETUS, Captain of the Guards.
DEMETRIUS, the Cynic, Friend to SENECA.
ACERONIA, Confidante to AGRIPPINA.

SCENE, the Emperor's Villa at BAIÆ.

The argument drawn out by him, in theſe two papers, under the idea of a plot and underplot, I ſhall here unite; as it will tend to ſhow that the action itſelf was poſſeſt of ſufficient unity.

The drama opens with the indignation of Agrippina, at receiving her ſon's orders from Anicetus to remove from Baiæ, and to have her guard taken from her. At this time Otho having conveyed Poppæa from the houſe of her huſband Rufus Criſpinus, brings her to Baiæ, where he means to conceal her among the croud; or, if his fraud is diſcovered, to have recourſe to the Emperor's authority; but, knowing the lawleſs temper of Nero, he determines not to have recourſe to that expedient, but

but on the utmoſt neceſſity. In the mean time he commits her to the care of Anicetus, whom he takes to be his friend, and in whoſe age he thinks he may ſafely confide. Nero is not yet come to Baiæ; but Seneca, whom he ſends before him, informs Agrippina of the accuſation concerning Rubellius Plancus, and deſires her to clear herſelf which ſhe does briefly; but demands to ſee her ſon, who, on his arrival, acquits her of all ſuſpicion, and reſtores her to her honours. In the mean while Anicetus, to whoſe care Poppæa had been entruſted by Otho, contrives the following plot to ruin Agrippina: He betrays his truſt to Otho, and brings Nero, as it were by chance, to the ſight of the beautiful Poppæa; the Emperor is immediately ſtruck with her charms, and ſhe, by a feigned reſiſtance, increaſes his paſſion; though, in reality, ſhe is from the firſt dazzled with the proſpect of empire, and forgets Otho: She therefore joins with Anicetus in his deſign of ruining Agrippina, ſoon perceiving that it will be for her intereſt. Otho hearing that the Emperor had ſeen Poppæa, is much enraged; but not knowing that this interview was obtained thro' the treachery of Anicetus, is readily perſuaded by him to ſee Agrippina in ſecret, and acquaint her with his fears that her ſon Nero would marry Poppæa. Agrippina, to ſupport her own power, and to wean the Emperor from the

love of Poppæa, gives Otho encouragement, and promiſes to ſupport him. Anicetus ſecretly introduces Nero to hear their diſcourſe; who reſolves immediately on his mother's death, and, by Anicetus's means, to deſtroy her by drowning. A ſolemn feaſt, in honour of their reconciliation, is to be made; after which ſhe being to go by ſea to Bauli, the ſhip is ſo contrived as to ſink or cruſh her; ſhe eſcapes by accident and returns to Baiæ. In this interval, Otho has an interview with Poppæa; and being duped a ſecond time by Anicetus and her, determines to fly with her into Greece, by means of a veſſel which is to be furniſhed by Anicetus; but he, pretending to remove Poppæa on board in the night, conveys her to Nero's apartment: She there encourages and determines Nero to baniſh Otho, and finiſh the horrid deed he had attempted on his mother. Anicetus undertakes to execute her reſolves; and, under pretence of a plot upon the Emperor's life, is ſent with a guard to murder Agrippina, who is ſtill at Baiæ in imminent fear, and irreſolute how to conduct herſelf. The account of her death, and the Emperor's horrour and fruitleſs remorſe, finiſhes the drama.

I refer the reader to the 13th and 14th books of the Annals for the facts on which this ſtory is founded: By turning to that author, he will eaſily ſee how far the poet thought it neceſſary to

to deviate from the truth of hiſtory. I ſhall only further obſerve, that as ſuch a fable could not poſſibly admit of any good character, it is terror only and not pity that could be excited by this tragedy, had it been compleated. Yet it was ſurely capable of exciting this paſſion in a ſupreme degree; if, what the criticks tell us be true, that crimes, which illuſtrious perſons commit, affect us from the very circumſtance of their rank, becauſe we unite with that our fears for public weal.

ACT I. SCENE I.

AGRIPPINA, ACERONIA.

AGRIPPINA.

'TIS well, begone! your errand is perform'd: [*Speaks as to Anicetus entering.*
The meſſage needs no comment. Tell your maſter,
His mother ſhall obey him. Say you ſaw her
Yielding due reverence to his high command:
Alone, unguarded, and without a Lictor,
As fits the daughter of Germanicus.
Say, ſhe retired to Antium; there to tend
Her houſhold cares, a woman's beſt employment.
What if you add, how ſhe turn'd pale and trembled;
You think, you ſpied a tear ſtand in her eye,
And would have drop'd, but that her pride reſtrain'd it?
(Go! you can paint it well) 'twill profit you,
And pleaſe the ſtripling. Yet 'twould daſh his joy
To hear the ſpirit of Britannicus
Yet walks on earth; at leaſt there are who know
Without a ſpell to raiſe and bid it fire

A thouſand haughty hearts, unus'd to ſhake
When a boy frowns, nor to be lur'd with ſmiles
To taſte of hollow kindneſs, or partake
His hoſpitable board: They are aware
Of th' unpledg'd bowl, they love not Aconite.

ACERONIA.

He's gone; and much I hope theſe walls alone,
And the mute air are privy to your paſſion.
Forgive your ſervant's fears, who ſees the danger
Which fierce reſentment cannot fail to raiſe
In haughty youth, and irritated power.

AGRIPPINA.

And doſt thou talk to me, to me, of danger,
Of haughty youth, and irritated power,
To her that gave it being, her that arm'd
This painted Jove, and taught his novice hand
To aim the forked bolt; while he ſtood trembling
Scar'd at the ſound, and dazzled with its brightneſs?
'Tis like, thou haſt forgot, when yet a ſtranger
To adoration, to the grateful ſteam
Of flattery's incenſe, or obſequious vows
From voluntary realms, a puny boy,
Deck'd with no other luſtre, than the blood
Of Agrippina's race, he liv'd unknown
To fame or fortune; haply eyed at diſtance
Some edileſhip, ambitious of the power
To judge of weights, and meaſures; ſcarcely dar'd
On expectation's ſtrongeſt wing to ſoar
High as the conſulate, that empty ſhade
Of long-forgotten liberty: When I
Op'd his young eye to bear the blaze of greatneſs;
Shew'd him where empire tower'd, and bade him ſtrike
The noble quarry. Gods! then was the time

To

To ſhrink from danger ; fear might then have worn
The maſk of prudence : but a heart like mine,
A heart that glows with the pure Julian fire,
If bright Ambition from her craggy ſeat
Diſplay the radiant prize, will mount undaunted,
Gain the rough heights, and graſp the dangerous honour.

ACERONIA.

Thro' various life I have purſued your ſteps,
Have ſeen your ſoul, and wonder'd at its daring :
Hence riſe my fears. Nor am I yet to learn
How vaſt the debt of gratitude, which Nero
To ſuch a mother owes ; the world, you gave him,
Suffices not to pay the obligation.

I well remember too (for I was preſent)
When in a ſecret and dead hour of night,
Due ſacrifice perform'd with barb'rous rites
Of mutter'd charms, and ſolemn invocation,
You bade the Magi call the dreadful powers,
That read futurity, to know the fate
Impending o'er your ſon : Their anſwer was,
If the ſon reign, the mother periſhes.
Periſh (you cry'd) the mother ! reign the ſon !
He reigns, the reſt is heav'n's ; who oft has bade,
Ev'n when its will ſeem'd wrote in lines of blood,
Th' unthought events diſcloſe a whiter meaning.
Think too how oft in weak and ſickly minds
The ſweets of kindneſs laviſhly indulg'd
Rankle to gall ; and benefits too great
To be repaid, ſit heavy on the ſoul,
As unrequited wrongs. The willing homage
Of proſtrate Rome, the ſenate's joint applauſe,
The riches of the earth, the train of pleaſures,
That wait on youth, and arbitrary ſway ;

Theſe

Theſe were your gift, and with them you beſtow'd
The very power he has to be ungrateful.

AGRIPPINA.

Thus ever grave, and undiſturb'd reflection
Pours its cool dictates in the madding ear
Of rage, and thinks to quench the fire it feels not.
Say'ſt thou I muſt be cautious, muſt be ſilent,
And tremble at the phantom I have rais'd?
Carry to him thy timid counſels. He
Perchance may heed 'em: Tell him too, that one,
Who had ſuch liberal power to give, may ſtill
With equal power reſume that gift, and raiſe
A tempeſt, that ſhall ſhake her own creation
To its original atoms—tell me! ſay
This mighty Emperor, this dreadful Hero,
Has beheld the glittering front of war?
Knows his ſoft ear the Trumpet's thrilling voice,
And outcry of the battle? Have his limbs
Sweat under iron harneſs? Is he not
The ſilken ſon of dalliance, nurs'd in Eaſe
And Pleaſure's flowery lap?—Rubellius lives,
And Sylla has his friends, tho' ſchool'd by fear
To bow the ſupple knee, and court the times
With ſhows of fair obeiſance; and a call,
Like mine, might ſerve belike to wake pretenſions
Drowſier than theirs, who boaſt the genuine blood
Of our imperial houſe.

ACERONIA.

Did I not wiſh to check this dangerous paſſion,
I might remind my miſtreſs that her nod
Can rouſe eight hardy legions, wont to ſtem
With ſtubborn nerves the tide, and face the rigour

Of

Of bleak Germania's ſnows. Four, not leſs brave,
That in Armenia quell the Parthian force
Under the warlike Corbulo, by you
Mark'd for their leader: Theſe, by ties confirm'd,
Of old reſpect and gratitude, are yours.
Surely the Maſians too, and thoſe of Egypt,
Have not forgot your ſire: The eye of Rome
And the Prætorian camp have long rever'd,
With cuſtom'd awe, the daughter, ſiſter, wife,
And mother of their Cæſars.

AGRIPPINA.

Ha! by Juno,
It bears a noble ſemblance. On this baſe
My great revenge ſhall riſe; or ſay we ſound
The trump of liberty; there will not want,
Even in the ſervile ſenate, ears to own
Her ſpirit-ſtirring voice; Soranus there,
And Caſſius; Vetus too, and Thraſea,
Minds of the antique caſt, rough, ſtubborn ſouls,
That ſtruggle with the yoke. How ſhall the ſpark,
Unquenchable, that glows within their breaſts,
Blaze into freedom, when the idle herd
(Slaves from the womb, created but to ſtare,
And bellow in the Circus) yet will ſtart,
And ſhake 'em at the name of liberty,
Stung by a ſenſeleſs word, a vain tradition,
As there were magick in it? wrinkled beldams
Teach it their grand children, as ſomewhat rare
That anciently appear'd, but when, extends
Beyond their chronicle—oh! 'tis a cauſe
To arm the hand of childhood, and rebrace
The ſlacken'd ſinews of time-wearied age.

Yes,

Yes, we may meet, ingrateful boy, we may!
Again the buried genius of old Rome
Shall from the duſt uprear his reverend head.
Rous'd by the ſhout of millions: There before
His high tribunal thou and I appear.
Let majeſty ſit on thy awful brow,
And lighten from thy eye: Around thee call
The gilded ſwarm that wantons in the ſunſhine
Of thy full favour; Seneca be there
In gorgeous phraſe of labour'd eloquence
To dreſs thy plea, and Burrhus ſtrengthen it
With his plain ſoldier's oath, and honeſt ſeeming.
Againſt thee liberty and Agrippina:
The world, the prize; and fair befal the victors.
But ſoft! why do I waſte the fruitleſs hours
In threats unexecuted? Haſte thee, fly
Theſe hated walls, that ſeem to mock my ſhame,
And caſt me forth in duty to their lord.

ACERONIA.

'Tis time we go, the ſun is high advanc'd,
And, ere mid-day, Nero will come to Baiæ.

AGRIPPINA.

My thought aches at him; not the baſiliſk
More deadly to the ſight, than is to me
The cool injurious eye of frozen kindneſs.
I will not meet its poiſon. Let him feel
Before he ſees me.

ACERONIA.

Why then ſtays my ſovereign,
Where he ſo ſoon may——

AGRIPPINA.

Yes, I will be gone,
But not to Antium—all ſhall be confeſs'd,
Whate'er

Whate'er the frivelous tongue of giddy fame
Has ſpread among the crowd; things, that but whiſper'd
Have arch'd the hearer's brow, and rivetted
His eyes in fearful extaſy: No matter
What; ſo't be ſtrange, and dreadful.—Sorceries,
Aſſaſſinations, poiſonings—the deeper
My guilt, the blacker his ingratitude.

And you, ye manes of ambition's victims,
Enſhrined Claudius, with the pitied ghoſts
Of the Syllani, doom'd to early death,
(Ye unavailing horrours, fruitleſs crimes!)
If from the realms of night my voice ye hear,
In lieu of Penitence, and vain remorſe,
Accept my vengeance. Tho' by me ye bled,
He was the cauſe. My love, my fears for him,
Dried the ſoft ſprings of pity in my heart,
And froze them up with deadly cruelty.
Yet if your injur'd ſhades demand my fate,
If murder cries for murder, blood for blood,
Let me not fall alone; but cruſh his pride,
And ſink the traitor in his mother's ruin. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

OTHO, POPPÆA.

OTHO.

Thus far we're ſafe. Thanks to the roſy queen
Of amorous thefts; And had her wanton ſon
Lent us his wings, we could not have beguil'd
With more excluſive ſpeed the dazzled ſight
Of wakeful jealouſy. Be gay ſecurely;
Diſpel, my fair, with ſmiles, the tim'rous cloud
That

That hangs on thy clear brow. So Helen look'd,
So her white neck reclin'd, ſo was ſhe borne
By the young Trojan to his gilded bark
With fond reluctance, yielding modeſty,
And oft reverted eye, as if ſhe knew not
Whether ſhe fear'd, or wiſh'd to be purſued.

* * * * * * *

LETTER III.

Mr. WEST to Mr. GRAY.

Popes, April 4, 1742.

I Own in general I think Agrippina's ſpeech too long: * but how to retrench it, I know not: But I have ſomething elſe to ſay, and that is in relation to the ſtyle, which appears to me too antiquated. Racine was of another opinion; he no where gives you the phraſes of Ronſard: His language is the language of the times, and that of the pureſt ſort; ſo that his French is reckoned a ſtandard. I will not decide what ſtyle is fit for our Engliſh ſtage; but I ſhould rather chooſe one that bordered upon Cato, than upon Shakeſpeare.

* The Editor has obviated this objection, not by retrenching, but by putting part of it into the mouth of Aceronia, and by breaking it in a few other places. Originally it was one continued ſpeech from the line "Thus ever grave and undiſturb'd Reflection" to the end of the ſcene; which was undoubtedly too long for the lungs of any Actreſs.

One

One may imitate (if one can) Shakeſpeare's manner, his ſurprizing ſtrokes of true nature, his expreſſive force in painting characters, and all his other beauties; preſerving at the ſame time our own language. Were Shakeſpeare alive now, he would write a different ſtyle from what he did. Theſe are my ſentiments upon theſe matters: Perhaps I am wrong, for I am neither a Tarpa, nor am I quite an Ariſtarchus. You ſee I write freely both of you and Shakeſpeare; but it is as good as writing not freely, where you know it is acceptable.

I have been tormented within this week with a moſt violent cough; for when once it ſets up its note, it will go on, cough after cough, ſhaking and tearing me for half an hour together; and then it leaves me in a great ſweat, as much fatigued as if I had been labouring at the plough. All this deſcription of my cough in proſe, is only to introduce another deſcription of it in verſe, perhaps not worth your peruſal: but it is very ſhort, and beſides has this remarkable in it, that it was the production of four o'clock in the morning, while I lay in my bed toſſing and coughing, and all unable to ſleep.——

Ante omnes morbos importuniſſima tuſſis,
Quâ durare datur, traxitque ſub ilia vires:
Dura etenim verſans imo ſub pectore regna,
Perpetuo exercet teneras luctamine coſtas,

Oraque

Oraque diſtorquet, vocemque immutat anhelam:
Nec ceſſare locus: ſed ſævo concita motu
Molle domat latus, & corpus labor omne fatigat:
Unde moleſta dies, noctemque inſomnia turbant.
Nec Tua, ſi mecum Comes hic jucundus adeſſes,
Verba juvare queant, aut hunc lenire dolorem
Sufficiant tua vox dulcis, nec vultus amatus.

Do not miſtake me, I do not condemn Tacitus: I was then inclined to find him tedious: The German ſedition ſufficiently made up for it; and the ſpeech of Germanicus, by which he reclaims his ſoldiers, is quite maſterly. Your New Dunciad I have no conception of. I ſhall be too late for our dinner if I write any more.

Yours.

LETTER VI.

Mr. GRAY to Mr. WEST.

London, April, Thurſday.

YOU are the firſt who ever made a Muſe of a Cough; to me it ſeems a much more eaſy taſk to verſify in one's ſleep, (that indeed you were of old famous for *) than for want of it. Not the wakeful nightingale (when ſhe had a cough) ever ſung ſo ſweetly. I give you

* I ſuppoſe at Eton School.

thanks

thanks for your warble, and wiſh you could ſing yourſelf to reſt. Theſe wicked remains of your illneſs will ſure give way to warm weather and gentle exerciſe; which I hope you will not omit as the ſeaſon advances. Whatever low ſpirits and indolence, the effect of them, may adviſe to the contrary, I pray you add five ſteps to your walk daily for my ſake; by the help of which in a month's time, I propoſe to ſet you on horſeback.

I talked of the Dunciad as concluding you had ſeen it; if you have not, do you chooſe I ſhould get and ſend it to you? I have myſelf upon your recommendation, been reading Joſeph Andrews. The incidents are ill laid and without invention; but the characters have a great deal of nature, which always pleaſes even in her loweſt ſhapes. Parſon Adams is perfectly well; ſo is Mrs. Slipſlop, and the ſtory of Wilſon; and throughout he ſhows himſelf well read in Stage-Coaches, Country Squires, Inns, and Inns of Court. His reflections upon high people and low people, and miſſes and maſters, are very good. However the exaltedneſs of ſome minds (or rather as I ſhrewdly ſuſpect their inſipidity and want of feeling or obſervation) may make them inſenſible to theſe light things, (I mean ſuch as characterize and paint nature) yet ſurely they are as weighty and much more uſeful than your

your grave diſcourſes upon the mind *, the paſſions, and what not. Now as the paradiſaical pleaſures ‡ of the Mahometans conſiſt in playing upon the flute and lying with Houris, be mine to read eternal new romances of Marivaux and Crebillon.

You are very good in giving yourſelf the trouble to read and find fault with my long harangues. Your freedom (as you call it) has ſo little need of apologies, that I ſhould ſcarce excuſe your treating me any otherwiſe; which, whatever compliment it might be to my vanity, would be making a very ill one to my underſtanding. As to matter of ſtyle, I have this to ſay: The language of the age § is never the language of poetry; except among the French, whoſe verſe, where the thought or image does not ſupport it, differs in nothing

* He ſeems here to glance at Hutchinſon, the diſciple of Shafteſbury: Of whom he had little better opinion, than of his maſter.

‡ Whimſically put.—But what ſhall we ſay of the preſent taſte of the French, when a writer whom Mr. Gray ſo juſtly eſteemed as M. Marivaux, is now held in ſuch contempt, that *Marivauder* is a faſhionable phraſe amongſt them, and ſignifies neither more nor leſs, than our faſhionable phraſe of *proſing*? As to Crebillon 'twas his "Egaremens du Cœur & d'Eſprit" that our author chiefly eſteemed; he had not, I believe, at this time publiſhed his more licentious pieces.

§ Nothing can be more juſt than this obſervation; and nothing more likely to preſerve our poetry from falling into inſipidity, than purſuing the rules here laid down for ſupporting the diction of it: Particularly with reſpect to the Drama.

from

from proſe. Our poetry, on the contrary, has a language peculiar to itſelf; to which almoſt every one, that has written, has added ſomething by enriching it with foreign idioms and derivatives: Nay ſometimes words of their own compoſition or invention. Shakeſpeare and Milton have been great creators this way; and no one more licentious than Pope or Dryden, who perpetually borrow expreſſions from the former. Let me give you ſome inſtances from Dryden, whom every body reckons a great maſter of our poetical tongue. —Full of *muſeful mopeings*—unlike the *trim* of love—a pleaſant *beverage*—a *roundelay* of love —ſtood ſilent in his *mood*— with knots and *knares* deformed—his *ireful mood*—in proud *array*—his *boon* was granted—— and *diſarray* and ſhameful rout—*wayward* but wiſe—*furbiſhed* for the field—the *ſoiled dodderd* oaks—*diſherited*—*ſmouldering* flames—*retchleſs* of laws —*crones* old and ugly—the *beldam* at his ſide—the *grandam-hag*—*villanize* his father's fame.— But they are infinite: And our language not being a ſettled thing (like the French) has an undoubted right to words of an hundred years old, provided antiquity have not rendered them unintelligible. In truth, Shakeſpeare's language is one of his principal beauties; and he has no leſs advantage over your Addiſons and Rowes in this, than in thoſe other great excellencies

cellencies you mention. Every word in him is a picture. Pray put me the following lines into the tongue of our modern Dramaticks:

But I, that am not ſhaped for ſportive tricks,
Nor made to court an amorous looking-glaſs:
I, that am rudely ſtampt, and want love's majeſty
To ſtrut before a wanton ambling nymph:
I, that am curtail'd of this fair proportion,
Cheated of feature by diſſembling nature,
Deform'd, unfiniſh'd, ſent before my time
Into this breathing world, ſcarce half made up—

And what follows. To me they appear untranſlatable; and if this be the caſe, our language is greatly degenerated. However, the affectation of imitating Shakeſpeare may doubtleſs be carried too far; and is no ſort of excuſe for ſentiments ill-ſuited, or ſpeeches ill-timed, which I believe is a little the caſe with me. I gueſs the moſt faulty expreſſions may be theſe—*ſilken* ſon of *dalliance*—*drowſier* pretenſions—wrinkled *beldams*—*arched* the hearer's brow, and *riveted* his eyes in *fearful extaſie*. Theſe are eaſily altered or omitted; and indeed if the thoughts be wrong or ſuperfluous, there is nothing eaſier than to leave out the whole. The firſt ten or twelve lines are, I believe, the beſt §; and as for the reſt, I was betrayed

§ The lines which he means here are from—*thus ever grave and undiſturb'd reflection*—to *Rubellius lives*. For the part of the ſcene, which he ſent in his former letter, began there.

into

into a good deal of it by Tacitus; only what he has ſaid in five words, I imagine I have ſaid in fifty lines: Such is the misfortune of imitating the inimitable. Now if you are of my opinion, *una litura* may do the buſineſs, better than a dozen; you need not fear unravelling my web. I am a ſort of ſpider; and have little elſe to do but ſpin it over again, or creep to ſome other place and ſpin there. Alas! for one who has nothing to do but amuſe himſelf, I believe my amuſements are as little amuſing as moſt folks. But no matter; it makes the hours paſs, and is better than ἐν ἀμαθίᾳ καὶ ἀμουσίᾳ καταβιῶναι.

Adieu.

LETTER V.

Mr. WEST to Mr. GRAY.

TO begin with the concluſion of your letter, which is Greek, I deſire that you will quarrel no more with your manner of paſſing your time. In my opinion it is irreproachable, eſpecially as it produces ſuch excellent fruit; and if I, like a ſaucy bird, muſt be pecking at it, you ought to conſider that it is becauſe I like it. No *una litura* I beg you, no unravelling of your web, dear Sir! only purſue it a little further, and then one ſhall be able to judge of it a little better. You know the criſis of

of a play is in the firſt act; its damnation or ſalvation wholly reſts there. But till that firſt act is over, every body ſuſpends his vote; ſo how do you think I can form, as yet, any juſt idea of the ſpeeches in regard to their length or ſhortneſs. The connection and ſymmetry of ſuch little parts with one another muſt naturally eſcape me, as not having the plan of the the whole in my head; neither can I decide about the thoughts whether they are wrong or ſuperfluous; they may have ſome future tendency which I perceive not. The ſtyle only was free to me, and there I find we are pretty much of the ſame ſentiment: For you ſay the affectation of imitating Shakeſpeare may doubtleſs be carried too far; I ſay as much and no more. For old words we know are old gold, provided they are well choſen. Whatever Ennius was, I do not conſider Shakeſpeare as a dunghill in the leaſt: On the contrary, he is a mine of antient ore, where all our great modern poets have found their advantage. I do not know how it is: but his old expreſſions * have more energy in them than ours,

* Shakeſpeare's energy does not ariſe ſo much from theſe old expreſſions, (moſt of which were not old in his time) but from his artificial management of them. This artifice in the great Poet is developed with much exactneſs by Dr. Hurd in his excellent note on this paſſage in Horace's Ep. ad Piſones.

Dixeris egregie, notum ſi callida verbum
Reddiderit junctura novum.

See Hurd's Horace, vol. 1ſt, Ed. 4th, p. 49.

and

and are even more adapted to poetry; certainly, where they are judiciouſly and ſparingly inſerted, they add a certain grace to the compoſition; in the ſame manner as Pouſſin gave a beauty to his picture by his knowledge in the ancient proportions: But ſhould he, or any other painter, carry the imitation too far, and neglect that beſt of models Nature, I am afraid it would prove a very flat performance. To finiſh this long criticiſm: I have this further notion about old words revived, (is not this a pretty way of finiſhing?) I think them of excellent uſe in tales; they add a certain drollery to the comic, and a romantic gravity to the ſerious, which are both charming in their kind; and this way of charming Dryden underſtood very well. One need only read Milton to acknowledge the dignity they give the Epick. But now comes my opinion that they ought to be uſed in Tragedy more ſparingly, than in moſt kinds of poetry. Tragedy is deſigned for publick repreſentation, and what is deſigned for that ſhould be certainly moſt intelligible. I believe half the audience that come to Shakeſpeare's plays do not underſtand the half of what they hear.—But finiſſons enfin. —Yet one word more.—You think the ten or twelve firſt lines the beſt, now I am for the

fourteen laſt *; add, that they contain not one word of antientry.

I rejoice you found amuſement in Joſeph Andrews. But then I think your conceptions of Paradiſe a little upon the Bergerac. Les Lettres du Seraphim R. a Madame la Cherubineſſe de Q. What a piece of extravagance would there be!

And now you muſt know that my body continues weak and enervate. And for my animal ſpirits, they are in perpetual fluctuation: ſome whole days I have no reliſh, no attention for any thing; at other times I revive, and am capable of writing a long letter, as you ſee; and though I do not write ſpeeches, yet I tranſlate them. When you underſtand what ſpeech, you will own that it is a bold and perhaps a dull attempt. In three words, it is proſe, it is from Tacitus, it is of Germanicus. Peruſe, perpend, pronounce ‡.

* He means the concluſion of the firſt ſcene.—But here and throughout his criticiſm on old words, he is not ſo conſiſtent as his correſpondent; for he here inſiſts that *all* antientry ſhould be ſtruck out, and in a former paſſage he admits it may be uſed ſparingly.

‡ This ſpeech I omit to print, as I have generally avoided to publiſh mere tranſlations either of Mr. Gray or his friend.

LET-

LETTER VI.

Mr. GRAY to Mr. WEST.

London, April, 1742.

I Should not have failed to anſwer your Letter immediately, but I went out of the town for a little while, which hindered me. Its length (beſides the pleaſure naturally accompanying a long letter from you) affords me a new one, when I think it is a ſymptom of the recovery of your health, and flatter myſelf that your bodily ſtrength returns in proportion. Pray do not forget to mention the progreſs you make continually. As to Agrippina, I begin to be of your opinion; and find myſelf (as women are of their children) leſs enamoured of my productions the older they grow. † She is laid up to ſleep

† He never after awakened her; and I believe this was occaſioned by the ſtrictures which his friend had made on his dramatick ſtyle; which (though he did not think them well founded, as they certainly were not) had an effect which Mr. Weſt, we may believe, did not intend them to have. I remember ſome years after I was the innocent cauſe of his delaying to finiſh his fine ode on the progreſs of Poetry. I told him, on reading the part he ſhowed me, that "though I admired it greatly, and thought that it "breathed the very ſpirit of Pindar, yet that I ſuſpected "it would by no means hit the publick taſte." Finding afterwards that he did not proceed in finiſhing it, I often expoſtulated with him on the ſubject; but he always replied. "No, you have thrown cold water upon it." I mention this little anecdote, to ſhew how much the opinion of a friend, even when it did not convince his judgment, affected his inclination.

till next ſummer; ſo bid her good night. I think you have tranſlated Tacitus very juſtly, that is, freely; and accommodated his thoughts to the turn and genius of our language; which, though I commend your judgement, is no commendation of the Engliſh tongue, which is too diffuſe, and daily grows more and more enervate. One ſhall never be more ſenſible of this, than in turning an Author like Tacitus. I have been trying it in ſome parts of Thucydides, (who has a little reſemblance of him in his conciſeneſs) and endeavoured to do it cloſely, but found it produced mere nonſenſe. If you have any inclination to ſee what figure Tacitus makes in Italian, I have a Tuſcan tranſlation of Davanzati, much eſteemed in Italy; and will ſend you the ſame ſpeech you ſent me; that is, if you care for it. In the mean time accept of Propertius. ***

LETTER VII.

Mr. WEST to Mr. GRAY.

Popes, May 5, 1742.

WITHOUT any preface I come to your verſes, which I read over and over with exceſſive pleaſure, and which are at leaſt as good as † Propertius. I am only ſorry

† A Tranſlation of the 1ſt elegy of the 2d book in Engliſh rhyme; omitted for the reaſon given in the laſt note but one.

you

you follow the blunders of Broukhuſius, all whoſe inſertions are nonſenſe. I have ſome objections to your antiquated words, and am alſo an enemy to Alexandrines; at leaſt I do not like them in Elegy. But, after all, I admire your tranſlation ſo extremely, that I cannot help repeating I long to ſhow you ſome little errors you are fallen into by following Broukhuſius ‡. *** Were I with you now, and Propertius with your verſes lay upon the table between us, I could diſcuſs this point in a moment; but there is nothing ſo tireſome as ſpinning out a criticiſm in a letter; doubts ariſe, and explanations follow, till there ſwells out at leaſt a volume of undigeſted obſervations: and all becauſe you are not with him whom you want to convince. Read only the Letters between Pope and Cromwell in proof of this; they diſpute without end. Are you aware now that I have an intereſt all this while in baniſhing Criticiſm from our correſpondence? Indeed I have; for I am going to write down a little Ode (if it deſerves the name) for your peruſal, which I am afraid will hardly ſtand that teſt. Nevertheleſs I leave you at your full liberty; ſo here it follows.

‡ I have omitted here a paragraph or two, in which different lines of the elegy were quoted, becauſe I had previouſly omitted the tranſlation of it.

O D E.

Dear Gray, that always in my heart
Poſſeſſeſt far the better part,
What mean theſe ſudden blaſts that riſe
And drive the Zephyrs from the ſkies?
O join with mine thy tuneful lay,
And invocate the tardy May.

Come, faireſt Nymph, reſume thy reign!
Bring all the Graces in thy train!
With balmy breath, and flowery tread,
Riſe from thy ſoft ambroſial bed;
Where, in Elyſian ſlumber bound,
Embow'ring myrtles veil thee round.

Awake, in all thy glories dreſt,
Recall the Zephyrs from the weſt;
Reſtore the ſun, revive the ſkies,
At mine, and Nature's call, ariſe!
Great Nature's ſelf upbraids thy ſtay,
And miſſes her accuſtom'd May.

See! all her works demand thy aid;
The labours of Pomona fade:
A plaint is heard from ev'ry tree;
Each budding flow'ret calls for thee;
The Birds forget to love and ſing;
With ſtorms alone the foreſts ring.

Come then, with Pleaſure at thy ſide,
Diffuſe thy vernal ſpirit wide;

Create

Create where'er thou turn'ſt thy eye,
Peace, Plenty, Love and Harmony;
Till ev'ry being ſhare its part,
And Heav'n and Earth be glad at heart.

LETTER VIII.

Mr. GRAY to Mr. WEST.

London, May 8, 1742.

I Rejoice to ſee you putting up your prayers to the May: She cannot chooſe but come at ſuch a call. It is as light and genteel as herſelf. You bid me find fault; I am afraid I cannot; however I will try. The firſt ſtanza (if what you ſay to me in it did not make me think it the beſt) I ſhould call the worſt of the five (except the fourth line). The two next are very picturesque, Miltonic and muſical; her bed is ſo ſoft and ſo ſnug that I long to lie with her. But thoſe two lines, "Great Nature" are my favourites. The exclamation of the flowers is a little ſtep too far. The laſt ſtanza is full as good as the ſecond and third; the laſt line bold, but I think not too bold. Now, as to myſelf and my tranſlation pray do not call names. I never ſaw Broukhuſius in my life. It is Scaliger who attempted to range Propertius in order; who was, and ſtill is, in ſad condition † * * *.

† Here ſome criticiſm on the Elegy is omitted for a former reaſon.

You ſee, by what I ſent you, that I converſe, as uſual, with none but the dead: They are my old friends, and almoſt make me long to be with them. You will not wonder therefore that I, who live only in times paſt, am able to tell you no news of the preſent. I have finiſhed the Peloponneſian war much to my honour, and a tight conflict it was, I promiſe you. I have drank and ſung with Anacreon for the laſt fortnight, and am now feeding ſheep with Theocritus. Beſides, to quit my figure, (for it is fooliſh) I have run over Pliny's Epiſtles and Martial ἐκ παρέργου; not to mention Petrarch, who, by the way, is ſometimes very tender and natural. I muſt needs tell you three lines in Anacreon, where the expreſſion ſeems to me inimitable. He is deſcribing hair as he would have it painted.

Ἕλικας δ' ἐλευθέρους μοι
Πλοκάμων ἄτακτα συνδεῖς
Ἀφεῖς ὡς θέλουσι κεῖσθαι.

Gueſs, too, where this is about a dimple.

Sigilla in mento impreſſa Amoris digitulo
Veſtigio demonſtrant mollitudinem.

LETTER IX.

Mr. WEST to Mr. GRAY.

Popes, May 11, 1742.

YOUR fragment is in Aulus Gellius; and both it and your Greek delicious. But why

why are you thus melancholy? I am ſo ſorry for it, that you ſee I cannot forbear writing again the very firſt opportunity; though I have little to ſay, except to expoſtulate with you about it. I find you converſe much with the dead, and I do not blame you for that; I converſe with them too, though not indeed with the Greek. But I muſt condemn you for your longing to be with them. What, are there no joys among the living? I could almoſt cry out with Catullus, *Alphene immemor, atque unanimis falſe ſodalibus!* But to turn an accuſation thus upon another, is ungenerous; ſo I will take my leave of you for the preſent with a *Vale et vive pauliſper cum vivis.*

LETTER X.

Mr. GRAY to Mr. WEST.

London, May 27, 1742.

MINE, you are to know, is a white Melancholy, or rather Leucocholy for the moſt part; which though it ſeldom laughs or dances, nor ever amounts to what one calls Joy or Pleaſure, yet is a good eaſy ſort of ſtate, and *ça ne laiſſe que de s'amuſer.* The only fault of it is inſipidity; which is apt now and then to give a ſort of *ennui*, which makes one form certain little wiſhes that ſignify nothing. But there

is another ſort, black indeed, which I have now and then felt, that has ſomewhat in it like Tertullian's rule of faith, *Credo quia impoſſibile eſt*; for it believes, nay, is ſure of every thing that is unlikely, ſo it be but frightful; and, on the other hand, excludes and ſhuts its eyes to the moſt poſſible hopes, and every thing that is pleaſurable; from this the Lord deliver us! for none but he and ſunſhiny weather can do it. In hopes of enjoying this kind of weather, I am going into the country for a few weeks, but ſhall be never the nearer any ſociety; ſo, if you have any charity, you will continue to write. My life is like Harry the Fourth's ſupper of Hens. *Poulets a la broche, Poulets en Ragôut, Poulets en Hâchis, Poulets en Fricaſees.* Reading here, reading there; nothing but books with different ſauces. Do not let me loſe my deſſert then; for tho' that be reading too, yet it has a very different flavour. The May ſeems to be come ſince your invitation; and I propoſe to baſk in her beams and dreſs me in her roſes. *Et caput in vernâ ſemper habere roſâ.*

I ſhall ſee Mr. ** and his wife, nay, and his child too, for he has got a boy. Is it not odd to conſider one's cotemporaries in the grave light of Huſband and Father? There are my Lords ** and ***, they are Stateſmen: Do not you remember them dirty boys playing at cricket? As for me, I am never a bit the older, nor the bigger, nor the wiſer than I was then; no, not for having been beyond ſea. Pray how are you?

I ſend you an inſcription for a wood joining to a park of mine; (it is on the confines of Mount Cithœron, on the left hand as you go to Thebes) you know I am no friend to hunters, being diſturbed by their noiſe.

Ἀζόμενος πολύθηρον ἐκηβόλε ἄλσος ἀνάσσας
Τᾶς δεινᾶς τεμενη λειπε, κυναγὲ, θεᾶς
Μῆνοι ἄρ ἔνθα κύμων ζαθέων κλαγγεῦσιν ὑλαγμοὶ
Ἀνταοχεῖς Νυμφᾶν ἀγροτερᾶν κελάδῳ *.

Here follows alſo the beginning of an Heroic Epiſtle; but you muſt give me leave to tell my own ſtory firſt, becauſe Hiſtorians differ. Maſſiniſſa was the ſon of Gala King of the Maſſyli; and, when very young at the head of his father's army, gave a moſt ſignal overthrow to Syphax, King of the Maſæſylians, then an ally of the Romans. Soon after Aſdrubal, ſon of Giſgo the Carthaginian General, gave the beautiful Sophoniſba, his daughter, in marriage to the young prince. But this marriage was not conſummated on account of Maſſiniſſa's being obliged to haſten into Spain, there to command his father's troops, who were auxiliaries of the Carthaginians. Their affairs at this time began to be in a bad condition; and they thought it might be greatly for their intereſt, if they could bring over Syphax to themſelves. This in time

* In the 12th Letter of the firſt Section, Mr. Gray ſays of his friend's tranſlation of an Epigram of Poſidippus, "Gra-"cam illam ἀφελείαν mirifice ſapit." The learned reader, I imagine, will readily give this tetraſtic the ſame character.

they

they actually effected; and to ſtrengthen their new alliance, commanded Aſdrubal to give his daughter to Syphax. (It is probable their ingratitude to Maſſiniſſa aroſe from the great change of affairs, which had happened among the Maſſylians during his abſence; for his father and uncle were dead, and a diſtant relation of the royal family had uſurped the throne.) Sophoniſba was accordingly married to Syphax; and Maſſiniſſa, enraged at the affront, became a friend to the Romans. They drove the Carthaginians before them out of Spain, and carried the war into Africa, defeated Syphax, and took him priſoner; upon which Cirtha (his capital) opened her gates to Lælius and Maſſiniſſa. The reſt of the affair, the marriage, and the ſending of poiſon, every body knows. This is partly taken from Livy, and partly from Appian.

SOPHONISBA MASSINISSÆ EPISTOLA.

Egregium accipio promiſſi Munus amoris,
Inque manu mortem jam fruitura fero:
Atque utinam citius mandaſſes, luce vel unâ;
Tranſieram Stygios non inhoneſta lacus.
Victoris nec paſſa toros, nova nupta, mariti,
Nec fueram faſtus, Roma ſuperba, tuos.
Scilicet hæc partem tibi Maſſiniſſa, triumphi
Detractam, hæc pompæ jura minora ſuæ
Imputat, atque uxor quòd non tua preſſa catenis,
Objecta & ſævæ plauſibus urbis eo:

Quin

Quin tu pro tantis cepiſti præmia factis
Magnum Romanæ pignus amicitiæ!
Scipiade excuſes, oro, ſi tardius utar
Munere. Non nimiùm vivere, crede, velim.
Parva mora eſt, breve ſed tempus mea fama requirit:
Detinet hæc animam cura ſuprema meam.
Quæ patriæ prodeſſe meæ Regina ferebar,
Inter Eliſæas gloria prima nurus,
Ne videar flammæ nimis indulſiſſe ſecundæ,
Vel nimis hoſtiles extimuiſſe manus.
Fortunam atque annos liceat revocare priores,
Gaudiaque heu! quantis noſtra repenſa malis.
Primitiaſne tuas meminiſti atque arma Syphacis
Fuſa, & per Tyrias ducta trophæa vias?
(Laudis at antiquæ forſan meminiſſe pigebit,
Quodque decus quondam cauſa ruboris erit.)
Tempus ego certe memini, felicia Pænis
Quo te non puduit ſolvere vota deis;
Mæniaque intrantem vidi: longo agmine duxit
Turba ſalutantum, purpureique patres.
Fœminea ante omnes longe admiratur euntem
Hæret & aſpectu tota caterva tuo.
Jam flexi, regale decus, per colla capilli,
Jam decet ardenti fuſcus in ore color!
Commendat frontis generoſa modeſtia formam,
Sèque cupit laudi ſurripuiſſe ſuæ.
Prima genas tenui ſignat vix flore juventas,
Et dextræ ſoli credimus eſſe virum.
Dum faciles gradiens oculos per ſingula jactas,
(Seu rexit caſus lumina, ſive Venus)
In me (vel certè viſum eſt) converſa morari
Senſi; virgineus perculit ora pudor.

Neſcio

Neſcio quid vultum molle ſpirare tuendo
  Credideramque tuos lentius ire pedes.
Quærebam, juxta æqualis ſi dignior eſſet,
  Quæ poterat viſus detinuiſſe tuos:
Nulla fuit circum æqualis quæ dignior eſſet,
  Aſſeruitque decus conſcia forma ſuum.
Pompæ finis erat *. Totâ vix nocte quievi:
  Sin premat invitæ lumina victa ſopor,
Somnus habet pompas, eadem recurſit imago;
  Atque iterum heſterno munere victor ades.

* * * * * * *

Immediately after writing the preceding Letter, Mr. Gray went upon a viſit to his relations at Stoke; where he writ that beautiful little Ode which ſtands firſt in this collection of Poems. He ſent it as ſoon as written to his beloved friend; but he was dead † before it reach-

* There is ſo much of nature in the ſentiment, as well as poetry in the deſcription of this triumphal entry of young Maſſiniſſa, that it ſeems much to be regretted the author did not finiſh this Poem. But I believe he never proceeded further with it. I had therefore my doubts concerning the printing of ſo ſmall a part; but as I thought it the beſt, becauſe the only original ſpecimen of Mr. Gray's Ovidian verſe, the reſt of his Hexameters and Pentameters being only tranſlations either from Engliſh or Italian, I was willing to give it to the reader.

† This ſingular anecdote is founded on a marginal note in his common-place book, where that ode is tranſcribed, and the following memorandum annexed: "Written at Stoke the "beginning of June, 1742, and ſent to Mr. Weſt, not "knowing he was then dead."

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ed Hertfordſhire. He died § only twenty days after he had written the letter to Mr. Gray, which concluded with "Vale, & vive pauliſper cum vivis." So little was the amiable youth then aware of the ſhort time that he himſelf would be numbered amongſt the living. But this is almoſt conſtantly the caſe with ſuch perſons as die of that almoſt remedileſs, yet moſt flattering of all diſtempers, a Conſumption. Shall Humanity be thankful or ſorry that it is ſo? Thankful, ſurely. For as this malady generally attacks the Young and Innocent, it ſeems the merciful intention of Heaven that, to theſe, death ſhould come unperceived, and as it were by ſtealth; diveſted of one of his ſharpeſt ſtings, the lingering expectation of their diſſolution. As to Mr. Gray, we may aſſure ourſelves that he felt much more than his dying friend, when the letter, which incloſed the Ode, was returned unopened. There ſeems to be a kind of preſentiment in that pathetick piece, which readers of taſte will feel when they learn this anecdote; and which will make them read it with redoubled pleaſure. It will alſo throw a melancholy grace (to borrow one

§ He was buried at Hatfield (the Houſe called Popes being in that pariſh). On a grave-ſtone in the chancel is the following plain inſcription: "Here lieth the body of Richard "Weſt, Eſq; only ſon to the Right Honourable Richard "Weſt, late Lord Chancellor of Ireland, who died the 1ſt "of June, 1742, in the 26th year of his age."

of

of his own expreſſions) on the Ode on a diſtant proſpect of Eton, and on that to Adverſity; both of them written the Auguſt following: for as both theſe Poems abound with pathos, thoſe who have feeling hearts will feel this excellence the more ſtrongly, when they know the cauſe from whence it aroſe; and the unfeeling will, perhaps, learn to reſpect what they cannot taſte, when they are prevented from imputing to a ſplenetic melancholy, what in fact ſprung from the moſt benevolent of all ſenſations. I am inclined to believe that the Elegy in a Country Church-yard was begun, if not concluded, at this time alſo: Though I am aware that, as it ſtands at preſent, the concluſion is of a later date; how that was originally, I ſhall ſhew in my notes on the poem. But the firſt impulſe of his ſorrow for the death of his friend, gave birth to a very tender Sonnet in Engliſh, on the Petrarchian model; and alſo to a ſublime Apoſtrophe in Hexameters, written in the genuine ſtrain of claſſical majeſty, with which he intended to begin one of his books, "De Principiis Cogitandi." This I ſhall ſhortly give the reader: But the ſonnet, being completed, I reſerve for publication amongſt the reſt of his Poems.

It may ſeem ſomewhat extraordinary, that Mr. Gray never attempted any thing in Engliſh verſe, (except the beginning of Agrippina, and

a few tranſlations) before the firſt Ode lately mentioned. Shall we attribute this to his having been educated at Eton, or to what other cauſe? Certain it is, that when I firſt knew him, he ſeemed to ſet a greater value on his Latin poetry, than on that which he had compoſed in his native language; and had almoſt the ſame foible then, which I have ſince known him laugh at in Petrarch, when we read that moſt entertaining of all books, entitled "Memoires ſur la vie de François Petrarque tirés de ſes œuvres, &c." I am apt to think that the litt e popularity which M. de Polignac's Anti-Lucretius acquired, after it had been ſo long and ſo eagerly expected by the learned, induced Mr. Gray to lay aſide his didactic plan. However this may be, he writ no Latin verſe after this period; except perhaps ſome part of the 1ſt book of the poem juſt mentioned. This therefore ſeems the proper place to introduce that fragment; which being the moſt conſiderable in itſelf of all his Latin compoſitions, and perhaps the moſt laboured of any of his poems, it were to be wiſhed that I could give the reader more inſight into his deſign, than the few ſcattered papers which he has left, enable me to do. It is clear, however, from the exordium itſelf, that he meant to make the ſame uſe of Mr. Locke's Eſſay on the Human Underſtanding, which Lucretius did of the Dogmas of Epicurus.

curus. And the firſt ſix lines plainly intimate, that his general deſign was to be comprized in four books.

The 1ſt. On the Origin of our Ideas.

Unde Animus ſcire incipiat —

The 2d. On the Diſtribution of theſe Ideas in the Memory.

—— quibus inchoet orſa
Principiis ſeriem rerum, tenuemque catenam
Mnemoſyne ——

The 3d. On the Province of Reaſon and its gradual Improvement.

—— Ratio unde, rudi ſub pectore, tardum
Augeat imperium ——

The 4th. On the Cauſe and Effects of the Paſſions.

—— & primum mortalibus ægris
Ira, Dolor, Metus, & Curæ naſcantur inanes.

But he has not drawn out any of the Arguments of theſe Books, except a part of the firſt; and that only ſo far as he executed of it. This it will be proper here to inſert; and alſo, for the eaſe of the Reader, to repeat the ſeveral parts at the bottom of the ſubſequent pages.

General Plan of the Poem. — Firſt, Invocation to Mr. Locke. Addreſs to Favonius, ſhewing the uſe and importance of the deſign. — Beginning. — Connection of the ſoul and body; Nerves, the inſtruments of ſenſation. — Touch, the

the firſt and moſt extenſive ſenſe, deſcribed. — Begins before the birth; Pain, our firſt idea when born.—Seeing, the ſecond ſenſe. Digreſſive encomium of Light. The gradual opening and improvement of this ſenſe, and that of Hearing, their connection with the higher faculties of the Mind; Senſe of Beauty and Order and Harmony annexed to them. From the latter, our delight in Eloquence, Poetry, and Muſick derived.—Office of the Taſte and Smell. —Internal ſenſe of Reflection, whereby the mind views its own powers and operations, compared to a young Wood-nymph admiring herſelf in ſome fountain. — Admiſſion of Ideas, ſome by a ſingle ſenſe, ſome by two, others by every way of Senſation and Reflection. Inſtance in a perſon born blind, he has no ideas of Light and Colours; but he has thoſe of Figure, Motion, Extenſion, and Space, (objects both of the ſight and touch.) Third ſort, thoſe which make their entrance into the mind by every channel alike; as Pleaſure, and Pain, Power, Exiſtence, Unity and Succeſſion. Properties of Bodies, whereby they make themſelves known to us. Primary qualities: Magnitude, Solidity, Mobility, Texture, and Figure. * * *

DE PRINCIPIIS COGITANDI.

Liber Primus.

Ad FAVONIUM.

1 UNDE Animus ſcire incipiat: quibus inchoet orſa
Principiis ſeriem rerum, tenuemque catenam
Mnemoſyne: Ratio unde rudi ſub pectore tardum
Augeat imperium; & primum mortalibus ægris
Ira, Dolor, Metus, & Curæ naſcantur inanes,
Hinc canere aggredior. 2 Nec dedignare canentem,
O decus! Angliacæ certe o lux altera gentis!
Si quâ primus iter monſtras, veſtigia conor
Signare incertâ, tremulâque inſiſtere plantâ. *
Quin potius duc ipſe (potes namque omnia) ſanctum
Ad limen, (ſi ritè adeo, ſi pectore puro,)
Obſcuræ reſerans Naturæ ingentia clauſtra.
Tu cæcas rerum cauſas, fontemque ſeverum
Pande, Pater; tibi enim, tibi, veri magne Sacerdos,
Corda patent hominum, atq; altæ penetralia Mentis.

Tuque aures adhibe vacuas, facileſque, Favonî,
(Quod tibi creſcit opus) 3 ſimplex nec deſpice carmen,

1 Plan of the Poem.——2 Invocation to Mr. Locke.

* It has been already obſerved in the Note on Letter 17, p. 35, that Mr. Gray's Hexameters, beſides having the variety of Virgil's pauſes, cloſed alſo with eliſions. For Virgil, as an attentive reader will immediately perceive, generally introduces one eliſion, and not unfrequently more, into thoſe lines which terminate the ſenſe. This gives to his verſification its laſt and moſt exquiſite grace, and leaves the ear fully ſatisfied. Mr. Gray could not fail to obſerve, and of courſe to aim at this happy effect of eliſions in a concluding line: of which the preſent poem, in particular, affords indubitable and abundant proofs.

3 Uſe and Extent of the Subject.

Nec

Nec vatem: non illa leves primordia motus,
Quanquam parva, dabunt. Lætum vel amabile quicquid
Uſquam oritur, trahit hinc ortum; nec ſurgit ad auras,
Quin ea conſpirent ſimul, eventuſque ſecundent.
Hinc variæ vitaï artes, ac mollior uſus,
Dulce & amicitiæ vinclum: Sapientia dia
Hinc roſeum accendit lumen, vultuque ſereno
Humanas aperit mentes, nova gaudia monſtrans,
Deformeſque fugat curas, vanoſque timores:
Scilicit & rerum creſcit pulcherrima Virtus.
Illa etiam, quæ te (mirùm) nocteſque dieſque
Aſſiduè fovet inſpirans, linguamque ſequentem
Temperat in numeros, atque horas mulcet inertes;
Aurea non aliâ ſe jactat origine Muſa.

4 Principio, ut magnum fœdus Natura creatrix
Firmavit, tardis juſſitque inoleſcere membris
Sublimes animas; tenebroſo in carcere partem
Noluit ætheream longo torpere veterno:
Nec per ſe proprium paſſa exercere vigorem eſt,
Ne ſociæ molis conjunctos ſperneret artus,
Ponderis oblita, & cœleſtis conſcia flammæ.
Idcircó 5 innumero ductu tremere undique fibras
Nervorum inſtituit: tum toto corpore miſcens
Implicuit latè ramos, & ſenſile textum,
Implevitque humore ſuo (ſeu lympha vocanda,
Sive aura eſt) tenuis certè, atque leviſſima quædam
Vis verſatur agens, parvoſque infuſa canales
Perfluit; aſſiduè externis quæ concita plagis,
Mobilis, incuſſique fidelis nuntia motûs,

4 Union of the Soul and Body.—5 Office of the nervous Syſtem.

Hinc

Hinc indè accenſâ contage relabitur uſque
Ad ſuperas hominis ſedes, arcemque cerebri.
Namque illîc poſuit ſolium, & ſua templa ſacravit,
6 Mens animi: hanc circum coëunt, denſoque ferun-
tur
Agmine notitiæ, ſimulacraque tenuia rerum:
Ecce autem naturæ ingens aperitur imago
Immenſæ, variique patent commercia mundi.

Ac uti longinquis deſcendunt montibus amnes
Velivolus Tamiſis, flaventiſque Indus arenæ,
Euphrateſque, Taguſque, & opimo flumine Ganges,
Undas quiſque ſuas volvens, curſuque ſonoro
In mare prorumpunt: hos magno acclinis in antro
Excipit Oceanus, natorumque ordine longo
Dona recognoſcit venientûm, ultròque ſerenat
Cæruleam faciem, & diffuſo marmore ridet.
Haud aliter ſpecies properant ſe inferre novellæ
Certatim menti, atque aditus quino agmine complent.

7 Primas tactus agit partes, primuſque minutæ
Laxat iter cæcum turbæ, recipitque ruentem.
Non idem huic modus eſt, qui fratribus: amplius ille
Imperium affectat ſenior, penituſque medullis,
Viſceribuſque habitat totis, pelliſque recentem
Funditur in telam, & latè per ſtamina vivit.
Necdum etiam matris puer eluctatus ab alvo
Multiplices ſolvit tunicas, & vincula rupit;
Sopitus molli ſomno, tepidoque liquore
Circumfuſus adhuc: tactus tamen aura laceſſit
Jamdudum levior ſenſus, animamque recluſit.
Idque magis ſimul, ac ſolitum blandumque calorem

6 Senſation, the Origin of our Ideas.—7 The Touch, our firſt and moſt extenſive Senſe.

Frigore

Frigore mutavit cœli, quod verberat acri
Impetu inaſſuetos artus : tum ſævior adſtat,
Humanæque comes vitæ Dolor excipit ; ille
Cunctantem fruſtrà & tremulo multa ore querentem
Corripit invadens, ferreiſque amplectitur ulnis.
8 Tum ſpecies primùm patefacta eſt candida Lucis
(Uſque vices adeò Natura bonique, malique,
Exæquat, juſtâque manu ſua damna rependit)
Tum primùm, ignotoſque bibunt nova lumina ſoles.

9 Carmine quo, Dea, te dicam, gratiſſima cœli
Progenies, ortumque tuum ; gemmantia rore
Ut per prata levi luſtras, & floribus halans
Purpureum Veris gremium, ſcenamque virentem
Pingis, & umbriferos colles, & cærula regna ?
Gratia te, Veneriſque Lepos, & mille Colorum,
Formarumque chorus ſequitur, Motuſque decentes.
At caput inviſum Stygiis Nox atra tenebris
Abdidit, horrendæque ſimul Formidinis ora,
Pervigileſque æſtus Curarum, atque anxius Angor :
Undique Lætitiâ florent mortalia corda,
Purus & arridet largis fulgoribus Æther.

Omnia nec tu ideò invalidæ ſe pandere Menti
(Quippe nimis teneros poſſet vis tanta diei
Perturbare, & inexpertos confundere viſus)
Nec capere infantes animos, neu cernere credas
Tam variam molem, & miræ ſpectacula lucis :
10 Neſcio quâ tamen hæc oculos dulcedine parvos
Splendida percuſſit novitas, traxitque ſequentes ;
Nonne videmus enim, latis inſerta feneſtris
Sicubi ſe Phœbi diſpergant aurea tela,

8 Sight, our ſecond Senſe.—9 Digreſſion on Light.—
10 Sight, imperfect at firſt, gradually improves.

Sive

Sive Lucernarem rutilus colluxerit ardor,
Extemplo hùc obverti aciem, quæ fixa repertos
Haurit inexpletum radios, fruiturque tuendo.

Altior huic verò ſenſu, majorque videtur
Addita, Judicioque arctè connexa poteſtas,
Quod ſimul atque ætas volventibus auxerit annis,
11 Hæc ſimul, aſſiduo depaſcens omnia viſu,
Perſpiciet, vis quanta loci, quid polleat ordo,
Junctura quis honos, ut res accendere rebus
Lumina conjurant inter ſe, & mutua fulgent.

Nec minor 12 in geminis viget auribus inſita virtus,
Nec tantum in curvis quæ pervigil excubet antris
Hinc atque hinc (ubi Vox tremefecerit oſtia pulſu
Aëriis invecta rotis) longèque recurſet:
Scilicet Eloquio hæc ſonitus, hæc fulminis alas,
Et mulcere dedit dictis & tollere corda,
Verbaque metiri numeris, verſuque ligare
Repperit, & quicquid diſcant Libethrides undæ,
Calliope quotiès, quotiès Pater ipſe canendi
Evolvat liquidum carmen, calamove loquenti
Inſpiret dulces animas, digitiſque figuret.

13 At mediàs fauces, & linguæ humentia templa
Guſtus habet, quà ſe inſinuet jucunda ſaporum
Luxuries, dona Autumni, Bacchique voluptas.
14 Naribus interea conſedit odora hominum vis,
Docta leves captare auras, Panchaïa quales
Vere novo exhalat, Floræve quod oſcula fragrant
Roſcida, cum Zephyri furtim ſub veſperis horâ
Reſpondet votis, mollemque aſpirat amorem.

11 Ideas of Beauty, Proportion, and Order.—12 Hearing, alſo improveable by the Judgment.——13 Taſte.—14 Smell.

15 Tot

15 Tot portas altæ capitis circumdedit arci
Alma Parens, ſenſûſque vias per membra recluſit;
Haud ſolas: namque intùs agit vivata facultas,
Quâ ſeſe explorat, contemplatuſque repentè
Ipſe ſuas animus vires, momentaque cernit.
Quid velit, aut poſſit, cupiat, fugiatve, viciſsìm
Percipit imperio gaudens; neque corpora fallunt
Morigera ad celeres actus, ac numina mentis.

Qualis Hamadryadum quondam ſi fortè ſororum
Una, novos peragrans ſaltus, & devia rura;
(Atque illam in viridi ſuadet procumbere ripâ
Fontis pura quies, & opaci frigoris umbra)
Dum prona in latices ſpeculi de margine pendet,
Mirata eſt ſubitam venienti occurrere Nympham:
Mox eoſdem, quos ipſa, artus, eadem ora gerentem
Unà inferre gradus, unà ſuccedere ſylvæ
Aſpicit alludens; ſeſeque agnoſcit in undis.
Sic ſenſu interno rerum ſimulacra ſuarum
Mens ciet, & proprios obſervat conſcia vultus.
16 Nec verò ſimplex ratio, aut jus omnibus unum
Conſtat imaginibus. Sunt quæ bina oſtia nôrunt;
Hæ privos ſervant aditus; ſine legibus illæ
Paſsìm, quà data porta, ruunt, animoque propinquant.
17 Reſpice, cui a cunis triſtes extinxit ocellos,
Sæva & in æternas merſit natura tenebras:
Illi ignota dies lucet, vernuſque colorum
Offuſus nitor eſt, & vivæ gratia formæ.
18 Corporis at ſilum, & motus, ſpatiumque, locique

15 Reflection, the other Source of our Ideas.—16 Ideas approach the Soul, ſome by ſingle Avenues, ſome by two, others by the Senſe.—17 Illuſtration.—Light, an example of the firſt.—18 Figure, Motion, Extenſion, of the ſecond.

Intervalla datur certo dignoſcere tactu :
Quandoquidem his iter ambiguum eſt, & janua duplex,
Excluſæque oculis ſpecies irrumpere tendunt
Per digitos. Atqui ſolis conceſſa poteſtas
Luminibus blandæ eſt radios immittere lucis.

19 Undique proporrò ſociis, quacunque pateſcit
Notitiæ campus, miſtæ laſciva feruntur
Turba voluptatis comites, formæque dolorum
Terribiles viſu, & portâ glomerantur in omni.
20 Nec vario minus introïtu magnum ingruit Illud,
Quo facere & fungi, quo res exiſtere circùm
Quamque ſibi proprio cum corpore ſcimus & ire
Ordine, perpetuoque per ævum flumine labi.

Nunc age quo valeat pacto, quâ ſenſilis arte
21 Affectare viam, atque animi tentare latebras
Materies, (dictis aures adverte faventes)
Exſequar. Imprimìs ſpatii quam multa per æquor
Millia multigenis pandant ſe corpora ſeclis,
Expende. Haud unum invenies, quod mente licebit
Amplecti, nedum propriùs deprendere ſenſu,
22 Molis egens certæ, aut ſolido ſine robore, cujus
Denique mobilitas linquit, texturave partes,
Ulla nec orarum circumcæſura coërcet.
Hæc conjuncta adeò totâ compage fatetur
Mundus, & extremo clamant in limine rerum,
(Si rebus datur Extremum) primordia. Firmat
Hæc eadem tactus (tactum quis dicere falſum
Audeat?) hæc oculi nec lucidus arguit orbis.

Inde poteſtatum enaſci denſiſſima proles ;
Nàm quodcunque ferit viſum, tangive laborat,

19 Pleaſure, Pain, of the third.—20 Alſo Power, Exiſtence, Unity, Succeſſion, Duration.—21 Primary Qualities of Bodies.—22 Magnitude, Solidity, Mobility, Texture, Figure.

Quic-

Quicquid nare bibis, vel concava concipit auris,
Quicquid lingua ſapit, credas hoc omne, neceſſe eſt
Ponderibus, textu, diſcurſu, mole, figurâ
Particulas præſtare leves, & ſemina rerum.
Nunc oculos igitur paſcunt, & luce miniſtrâ
Fulgere cuncta vides, ſpargique coloribus orbem,
Dum de ſole trahunt alias, aliaſque ſupernè
Detorquent, retròque docent ſe vertere flammas.
Nunc trepido inter ſe fervent corpuſcula pulſa,
Ut tremor æthera per magnum, latèque natantes
Aurarum fluctus avidi vibrantia clauſtra
Auditûs queat allabi, ſonitumque propaget.
Cominùs interdum non ullo interprete per ſe
Nervorum invadunt teneras quatientia fibras,
Senſiferumque urgent ultrò per viſcera motum.

* * *

DE PRINCIPIIS COGITANDI

Liber Quartus.

HACTENUS haud ſegnis Naturæ arcana retexi
Muſarum interpres, primuſque Britanna per arva
Romano liquidum deduxi flumine rivum.
Cum Tu opere in medio, ſpes tanti & cauſa laboris,
Linquis, & æternam fati te condis in umbram!
Vidi egomet duro graviter concuſſa dolore
Pectora, in alterius non unquam lenta dolorem;
Et languere oculos vidi, & palleſcere amantem
Vultum, quo nunquam Pietas niſi rara, Fideſque,
Altus amor Veri, & purum ſpirabat Honeſtum.
Viſa tamen tardi demùm inclementia morbi
Ceſſare eſt, reducemque iterum roſeo ore Salutem
Speravi, atque unà tecum, dilecte Favoni!
Credulus heu longos, ut quondàm, fallere Soles:

Heu ſpes nequicquam dulces, atque irrita vota!
Heu mœſtos Soles, ſine te quos ducere flendo
Per deſideria, & queſtus jam cogor inanes!

At Tu, ſancta anima, & noſtri non indiga luctûs,
Stellanti templo, ſincerique ætheris igne,
Unde orta es, fruere; atque o ſi ſecura, nec ultra
Mortalis, notos olîm miſerata labores
Reſpectes, tenueſque vacet cognoſcere curas;
Humanam ſi fortè altâ de ſede procellam
Contemplêre, metus, ſtimuloſque cupidinis acres,
Gaudiaque & gemitus, parvoque in corde tumultum
Irarum ingentem, & fævos ſub pectore fluctus;
Reſpice & has lacrymas, memori quas ictus amore
Fundo; quod poſſum, juxtà lugere ſepulchrum
Dum juvat, & mutæ vana hæc jactare favillæ.

* * *

END OF THE THIRD SECTION.

SEC-

SECTION THE FOURTH.

THE three foregoing Sections have carried the Reader through the juvenile part of Mr. Gray's life, and nearly, alas, to half of its duration. Thoſe which remain, though leſs diverſified by incidents, will, notwithſtanding, I flatter myſelf, be equally inſtructive and amuſing, as ſeveral of his moſt intimate friends have very kindly furniſhed me with their collections of his letters; which, added to thoſe I have myſelf preſerved, will enable me to ſelect from them many excellent ſpecimens of his more mature judgment, correct taſte, and extenſive learning, blended at the ſame time with many amiable inſtances of his ſenſibility: they will alſo ſpecify the few remaining anecdotes, which occurred in a life ſo retired and ſedentary as his: for the reader muſt be here informed that, from the winter of the year 1742 to the day of his death, his principal reſidence was at Cambridge. He indeed, during the lives of his mother and aunts, ſpent his ſummer vacations at Stoke; and, after they died, in making little tours on viſits to his friends in different parts of the country: But he was ſeldom abſent from college any conſiderable time, except between the years 1759 and 1762; when, on the opening of the Britiſh Muſeum, he took lodgings

in Southampton-Row, in order to have recourſe to the Harleian and other Manuſcripts there depoſited, from which he made ſeveral curious extracts *.

It may ſeem ſtrange that a perſon who had conceived ſo early a diſlike to Cambridge, and who (as we ſhall ſee preſently) now returned to it with this prejudice rather augmented, ſhould, when he was free to chooſe, make that very place his principal abode for near thirty years: But this I think may be eaſily accounted for from his love of books, (ever his ruling paſſion) and the ſtraitneſs of his circumſtances which prevented the gratification of it. For to a man, who could not conveniently purchaſe even a ſmall library, what ſituation ſo eligible as that which affords free acceſs to a number of large ones? This reaſon alſo accounts for another ſingular fact. We have ſeen that, during his reſidence at Stoke, in the ſpring and ſummer of this ſame year 1742, he writ a conſiderable part of his more finiſhed poems. Hence one would be naturally led to conclude that, on his return to Cambridge, when the ceremony of taking his degree was over, the quiet of the place would

* Theſe, amounting in all to a tolerably ſized folio, are at preſent in Mr. Walpole's hands. He has already printed the ſpeech of Sir Thomas Wyat from them in the ſecond number of his Miſcellaneous Antiquities. The Publick muſt impute it to their own want of curioſity if more of them do not appear in print.

have

have prompted him to continue the cultivation of his poetical talents, and, that immediately, as the Muſe ſeems in this year to have peculiarly inſpired him; but this was not the caſe. Reading, he has often told me, was much more agreeable to him than writing: He therefore now laid aſide compoſition almoſt entirely, and applied himſelf with intenſe aſſiduity to the ſtudy of the beſt Greek authors; inſomuch that, in the ſpace of about ſix years, there were hardly any writers of note in that language which he had not only read but digeſted, remarking by the mode of common-place, their contents, their difficult and corrupt paſſages, and all this with the accuracy of a critic added to the diligence of a ſtudent.

Before I inſert the next ſeries of letters, I muſt take the liberty to mention, that it was not till about the year 1747 that I had the happineſs of being introduced to the acquaintance of Mr. Gray. Some very juvenile imitations of Milton's juvenile poems, which I had written a year or two before, and of which the monody on Mr. Pope's death was the principal *, he then, at the requeſt of one of my

* The other two were in imitation of "l'Allegro & il "Penſeroſo," and intitled "Il Bellicoſo & il Pacifico." The latter of theſe I was perſuaded to reviſe and publiſh in the Cambridge Collection of Verſes on the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, 1748. The former has ſince got into a Miſcellany, printed by G. Pearch, from the indiſcretion, I ſuppoſe, of ſome acquaintance who had a copy of it.

friends, was ſo obliging as to reviſe. The ſame year on account of a diſpute which had happened between the maſter and fellows of Pembroke-Hall, I had the honour of being nominated by the Fellows to fill one of the vacant Fellowſhips §. I was at this time ſcholar of St. John's College, and Batchelor of Arts, perſonally unknown to the gentlemen who favoured me ſo highly; therefore that they gave me this mark of diſtinction and preference was greatly owing to Mr. Gray, who was well acquainted with ſeveral of that ſociety, and to Dr. Heberden, whoſe known partiality to every, even the ſmalleſt degree of merit, led him warmly to ſecond his recommendation. The reader I hope, will excuſe this ſhort piece of egotiſm, as it is written to expreſs my gratitude, as well to the living as to the dead, to declare the ſenſe I ſhall ever retain of the honour which the Fellows of Pembroke-Hall then did me, and to particularize the time of an incident which brought me into the neighbourhood of Mr. Gray's College; and ſerved to give that cement to our future intimacy, which is uſually rendered ſtronger by proximity of place.

§ Tho' nominated in 1747, I was not elected Fellow till February, 1749. The maſter having refuſed his aſſent, claiming a negative, the affair was therefore not compromiſed till after an ineffectual litigation of two years.

The

The letters, which I ſelect for this ſection, are from the date of the year 1742 to that of 1768, when Mr. Gray was made Profeſſor of Modern Hiſtory. This, as it is a conſiderable interval of time, will perhaps require me the more frequently to reſume my narrative; eſpecially as I cannot now produce one continued chain of correſpondence.

LETTER I.

Mr. GRAY to * Dr. WHARTON.

Cambridge, Dec. 27, 1742.

I Ought to have returned you my thanks a long time ago for the pleaſure, I ſhould ſay prodigy, of your Letter; for ſuch a thing has not happened above twice within this laſt age to mortal man, and no one here can conceive what it may portend. You have heard, I ſuppoſe, how I have been employed a part of the time; how, by my own indefatigable application for theſe ten years paſt, and by the care and vigilance of that worthy magiſ-

* Of Old-Park, near Durham. With this Gentleman Mr. Gray contracted an acquaintance very early; and though they were not educated together at Eton, yet afterwards at Cambridge, when the Doctor was Fellow of Pembroke-Hall, they became intimate friends, and continued ſo to the time of Mr. Gray's death.

trate the Man in Blue †, (who I aſſure you, has not ſpared his labour, nor could have done more for his own Son) I am got half way to the top of Juriſprudence *, and bid as fair as another body to open a caſe of impotency with all decency and circumſpection. You ſee my ambition. I do not doubt but ſome thirty years hence I ſhall convince the world and you that I am a very pretty young fellow; and may come to ſhine in a profeſſion, perhaps, the nobleſt of all except man-midwifery. As for you, if your diſtemper and you can but agree about going to London, I may reaſonably expect in a much ſhorter time to ſee you in your three-cornered villa, doing the honours of a well-furniſhed table with as much dignity, as rich a mien, and as capacious a belly as Dr. Mead. Methinks I ſee Dr. * *, at the lower end of it, loſt in admiration of your goodly perſon and parts, cramming down his Envy (for it will riſe) with the wing of a pheaſant, and drowning it in neat Burgundy. But not to tempt your Aſthma too much with ſuch a proſpect, I ſhould think you might be almoſt as happy and as great as this even in the country. But you know beſt, and I ſhould be ſorry to ſay any thing that might ſtop you

† A Servant of the Vice-Chancellors for the time being, uſually known by the name of Blue Coat, whoſe buſineſs it is to attend Acts for Degrees, &c.

* *i. e.* Bachelor of Civil Law.

in

in the career of Glory; far be it from me to hamper the wheels of your gilded chariot. Go on, Sir Thomas; and when you die, (for even Phyſicians muſt die) may the faculty in Warwick-lane erect your ſtatue in the very niche of Sir John Cutler's.

I was going to tell you how ſorry I am for your illneſs, but I hope it is too late now: I can only ſay that I really was very ſorry. May you live a hundred Chriſtmaſſes, and eat as many collars of brawn ſtuck with roſemary. Adieu, &c.

* * * * *

Though I have ſaid that Mr. Gray on his return to Cambridge, laid aſide Poetry almoſt entirely, yet I find amongſt his papers a ſmall fragment in verſe, which bears internal evidence that it was written about this very time. The foregoing Letter, in which he employs ſo much of his uſual vein of ridicule on the univerſity, ſeems to be no improper introduction to it: I ſhall therefore inſert it here without making any apology, as I have given one, on a ſimilar occaſion, in the firſt ſection.

It ſeems to have been intended as a Hymn or Addreſs to Ignorance; and I preſume, had he proceeded with it, would have contained much good ſatire upon falſe ſcience and ſcholaſtic pedantry. What he writ of it is purely introductory; yet many of the lines are ſo ſtrong,

and

and the general caſt of verſification ſo muſical, that I believe it will give the generality of readers a higher opinion of his poetical talents, than many of his lyrical productions have done. I ſpeak of the Generality; becauſe it is a certain fact, that their taſte is founded upon the ten-ſyllable couplets of Dryden and Pope, and upon theſe only.

HAIL, Horrors, hail! ye ever gloomy bowers,
Ye gothick fanes, and antiquated towers,
Where ruſhy Camus' ſlowly-winding flood
Perpetual draws his humid train of mud:
Glad I reviſit thy neglected reign,
O take me to thy peaceful ſhade again.
But chiefly thee, whoſe influence breath'd from [high
Augments the native darkneſs of the ſky;
Ah! Ignorance! ſoft ſalutary Power!
Proſtrate with filial reverence I adore.
Thrice hath Hyperion roll'd his annual race,
Since weeping I forſook thy fond embrace.
O ſay, ſucceſsful doſt thou ſtill oppoſe
Thy leaden Ægis 'gainſt our antient foes?
Still ſtretch, tenacious of thy right divine,
The maſſy ſceptre o'er thy ſlumb'ring line?
And dews Lethæan thro' the land diſpenſe
To ſteep in ſlumbers each benighted ſenſe?
If any ſpark of Wit's deluſive ray
Break out, and flaſh a momentary day,
With damp, cold touch forbid it to aſpire,
And huddle up in fogs the dangerous fire.

O

O ſay—ſhe hears me not, but careleſs grown,
Lethargic nods upon her ebon throne.
Goddeſs! awake, ariſe, alas my fears!
Can powers immortal feel the force of years?
Not thus of old, with enſigns wide unfurl'd,
She rode triumphant o'er the vanquiſh'd world;
Fierce nations own'd her unreſiſted might,
And all was Ignorance, and all was night.

Oh ſacred Age! O Times for ever loſt!
(The School-man's glory, and the Church-man's boaſt).
For ever gone — yet ſtill to fancy new,
Her rapid wings the tranſient ſcene purſue,
And bring the buried ages back to view.

High on her car, behold the Grandam ride
Like old Seſoſtris with barbaric pride;
* * * * a team of harneſs'd monarchs bend
* * * * * * * * * *

LETTER II.

Mr. GRAY to Dr. WHARTON.

Peterhouſe, April 26, 1744.

YOU write ſo feelingly to Mr. Brown, and repreſent your abandoned condition in terms ſo touching, that what gratitude could not effect in ſeveral months, compaſſion has brought about in a few days; and broke that ſtrong attachment, or rather allegiance, which

I and all here owe to our ſovereign Lady and Miſtreſs, the Preſident of Preſidents and Head of Heads, (if I may be permitted to pronounce her name, that ineffable Octogrammaton) the power of Lazineſs. You muſt know ſhe had been pleaſed to appoint me (in preference to ſo many old ſervants of her's who had ſpent their whole lives in qualifying themſelves for the office) Grand Picker of Straws and Puſh-pin Player to her Supinity (for that is her title). The firſt is much in the nature of Lord Preſident of the Council; and the other, like the Groom-Porter, only without the profit; but as they are both things of very great honour in this country, I conſidered with myſelf the load of envy attending ſuch great charges; and beſides, (between you and me) I found myſelf unable to ſupport the fatigue of keeping up the appearance that perſons of ſuch dignity muſt do, ſo I thought proper to decline it, and excuſed myſelf as well as I could. However, as you ſee ſuch an affair muſt take up a good deal of time, and it has always been the policy of this court to proceed ſlowly, like the Imperial and that of Spain, in the diſpatch of buſineſs, you will on this account the eaſier forgive me, if I have not anſwered your letter before.

You deſire to know, it ſeems, what character the Poem of your young friend bears here*.

I

* Pleaſures of the Imagination: from the poſthumous publication of Dr. Akenſide's Poems, it ſhould ſeem that the Author

I wonder that you aſk the opinion of a Nation, where thoſe, who pretend to judge, do not judge at all; and the reſt (the wiſer part) wait to catch the judgment of the world immediately above them; that is, Dick's and the Rainbow coffee-houſes. Your readier way would be to aſk the Ladies that keep the bars in theſe two theatres of Criticiſm. However to ſhew you that I am a judge as well as my countrymen, I will tell you, though I have rather turned it over than read it, (but no matter; no more have they) that it ſeems to me above the middling; and now and then, for a little while, riſes even to the beſt, particularly in deſcription. It is often obſcure, and even unintelligible; and too much infected with the Hutchinſon jargon. In ſhort, its great fault is, that it was publiſhed at leaſt nine years too early. And ſo methinks in a few words, *à la mode du Temple*, I have very pertly diſpatched what perhaps may for ſeveral years have employed a very ingenious man worth fifty of myſelf.

You are much in the right to have a taſte for Socrates; he was a divine man. I muſt tell you, by way of news of the place, that the other day a certain new Profeſſor made an Apology for him an hour long in the ſchools; and

Author had very much the ſame opinion afterwards of his own Work, which Mr: Gray here expreſſes: ſince he undertook a reform of it which muſt have given him, had he concluded it, as much trouble as if he had written it entirely new.

all

all the world brought in Socrates guilty, except the people of his own college.

The muſe is gone, and left me in far worſe company; if ſhe returns, you will hear of her. As to her child *, (ſince you are ſo good to enquire after it) it is but a puling chit yet, not a bit grown to ſpeak of; I believe, poor thing, it has got the worms that will carry it off at laſt. Mr. Trollope and I are in a courſe of Tar-water; he for his preſent, and I for my future diſtempers. If you think it will kill me, ſend away a man and horſe directly; for I drink like a fiſh. Your's, &c.

LETTER III.

Mr. GRAY to Dr. WHARTON.

Cambridge, Dec. 11, 1746.

I Would make you an excuſe, (as indeed I ought) if they were a thing I ever gave any credit to myſelf in theſe caſes; but I know they are never true. Nothing ſo ſilly as indolence when it hopes to diſguiſe itſelf: every one knows it by its ſaunter, as they do his Majeſty (God bleſs him) at a Maſquerade, by the firmneſs of his tread and the elevation of his chin. However, ſomewhat I had to ſay that has a little

* He here means his Poem "De Principiis Cogitandi."—See the laſt Section.

ſhadow

ſhadow of reaſon in it. I have been in town (I ſuppoſe you know) flaunting about at all kind of publick places with two friends lately returned from abroad. The world itſelf has ſome attractions in it to a ſolitary of ſix years ſtanding; and agreeable well-meaning people of ſenſe (thank Heaven there are ſo few of them) are my peculiar magnet. It is no wonder then if I felt ſome reluctance at parting with them ſo ſoon; or if my ſpirits, when I returned back to my cell, ſhould ſink for a time, not indeed to ſtorm and tempeſt, but a good deal below changeable. Beſides, Seneca ſays (and my pitch of philoſophy does not pretend to be much above Seneca) *Nunquam mores, quos extuli, refero. Aliquid ex eo quod compoſui, turbatur: aliquid ex his, quæ fugavi, redit.* And it will happen to ſuch as us, mere imps of ſcience. Well it may, when Wiſdom herſelf is forced often

In ſweet retired Solitude
To plume her feathers, and let grow her wings,
That in the various buſtle of Reſort
Were all too ruffled, and ſometimes impair'd.

It is a fooliſh thing that without Money one cannot either live as one pleaſes, or where, and with whom one pleaſes. Swift ſomewhere ſays, that Money is Liberty; and I fear money is Friendſhip too and Society, and almoſt every external bleſſing. It is a great, though an ill-natured comfort, to ſee moſt of thoſe who have it

it in plenty, without Pleaſure, without Liberty, and without Friends.

I am not altogether of your opinion as to your hiſtorical conſolation in time of trouble: A calm melancholy it may produce, a ſtiller ſort of deſpair (and that only in ſome circumſtances, and on ſome conſtitutions); but I doubt no real comfort or content can ever ariſe in the human mind, but from Hope.

I take it very ill you ſhould have been in the twentieth year of the War *, and yet ſay nothing of the retreat before Syracuſe: Is it, or is it not, the fineſt thing you ever read in your life? And how does Xenophon or Plutarch agree with you? For my part I read Ariſtotle, his Poeticks, Politicks, and Morals; though I do not well know which is which. In the firſt place, he is the hardeſt author by far I ever meddled with. Then he has a dry conciſeneſs, that makes one imagine one is peruſing a table of contents rather than a book: it taſtes for all the world like chopp'd hay, or rather like chopp'd logick; for he has a violent affection to that art, being in ſome ſort his own invention; ſo that he often loſes himſelf in little trifling diſtinctions, and verbal niceties; and, what is worſe, leaves you to extricate him as well as you can. Thirdly, he has ſuffered vaſtly from the tranſcribers, as all authors of great brevity

* Thucydides, lib. vii.

neceſſarily

neceſſarily muſt. Fourthly and laſtly, he has abundance of fine uncommon things, which make him well worth the pains he gives one. You ſee what you are to expect from him.

LETTER IV.

Mr. GRAY to Mr. WALPOLE.

Cambridge, 1747.

I Had been abſent from this place a few days, and at my return found Cibber's book * upon my table: I return you my thanks for it, and have already run over a conſiderable part; for who could reſiſt Mrs. Letitia Pilkington's recommendation? (By the way, is there any ſuch gentlewoman †? or has ſomebody put on the ſtyle of a ſcribbling woman's panegyrick to deceive and laugh at Colley?) He ſeems to me full as pert and as dull as uſual. There are whole pages of common-place ſtuff, that for ſtupidity might have been wrote by Dr. Waterland, or any other grave divine, did not the flirting ſaucy phraſe give them at a diſtance an air of youth and gaiety: It is very true, he is often in the right with regard to Tully's weak-

* Entitled "Obſervations on Cicero's Character," or ſome ſuch thing; for I have not the book by me, and it has been long ſince forgot.

† This Lady made herſelf more known ſome time after the date of this letter.

neſſes;

neſſes; but was there any one that did not ſee them? Thoſe, I imagine, that would find a man after God's own heart, are no more likely to truſt the Doctor's recommendation than the Player's; and as to Reaſon and Truth, would they know their own faces, do you think, if they looked in the glaſs, and ſaw themſelves ſo bedizened in tattered fringe and tarniſhed lace, in French jewels, and dirty furbelows, the frippery of a ſtroller's wardrobe?

Literature, to take it in its moſt comprehenſive ſenſe, and include every thing that requires invention or judgement, or barely application and induſtry, ſeems indeed drawing apace to its diſſolution, and remarkably ſince the beginning of the war. I remember to have read Mr. Spence's pretty book; though (as he then had not been at Rome for the laſt time) it muſt have increaſed greatly ſince that in bulk. If you aſk me what I read, I proteſt I do not recollect one ſyllable; but only in general, that they were the beſt bred ſort of men in the world, juſt the kind of *frinds* one would wiſh to meet in a fine ſummer's evening, if one wiſhed to meet any at all. The heads and tails of the dialogues, publiſhed ſeparate in 16mo, would make the ſweeteſt reading in *natiur* for young gentlemen of family and fortune, that are learning to dance*. I rejoice to hear there is ſuch

* This ridicule on the Platonick way of dialogue (as it was aimed to be, tho' nothing leſs reſembles it) is, in my opinion,

ſuch a crowd of dramatical performances coming upon the ſtage. Agrippina can ſtay very well, ſhe thanks you, and be damned at leiſure: I hope in God you have not mentioned, or ſhewed to any body that ſcene (for truſting in its badneſs, I forgot to caution you concerning it); but I heard the other day, that I was writing a Play, and was told the name of it, which nobody here could know I am ſure. The employment you propoſe to me much better ſuits my inclination; but I much fear our joint ſtock would hardly compoſe a ſmall volume; what I have is leſs conſiderable than you would imagine, and of that little we ſhould not be willing to publiſh all. * * * §

nion, admirable. Lord Shafteſbury was the firſt who brought it into vogue, and Mr. Spence (if we except a few Scotch writers) the laſt who practiſed it. As it has now been laid aſide ſome years, we may hope, for the ſake of true taſte, that this frippery mode of compoſition will never come into faſhion again; eſpecially ſince Dr. Hurd has pointed out, by example as well as precept, wherein the true beauty of Dialogue-writing conſiſts.

§ What is here omitted was a ſhort catalogue of Mr. Weſt's poetry then in Mr. Gray's hands; the reader has ſeen as much of it in the three foregoing ſections as I am perſuaded his friend would have publiſhed, had he proſecuted the taſk which Mr. Walpole recommended to him, that of printing his own and Mr. Weſt's Poems in the ſame volume; and which we alſo perceive from this letter, he was not averſe from doing. This therefore ſeems to vindicate the Editor's plan in arranging theſe papers; as he is enabled by it not only to ſhew what Mr. Weſt would have been, but what Mr. Gray was, I mean not as a Poet, for that the world knew before, but as an univerſal Scholar, and (what is ſtill of more conſequence) as an excellent moral Man.

This

This is all I can any where find. You, I imagine, may have a good deal more. I ſhould not care how unwiſe the ordinary run of readers might think my affection for him, provided thoſe few, that ever loved any body, or judged of any thing rightly, might, from ſuch little remains, be moved to conſider what he would have been; and to wiſh that Heaven had granted him a longer life and a mind more at eaſe.

I ſend you a few lines, though Latin, (which you do not like) for the ſake of the ſubject *; it makes part of a large deſign, and is the beginning of the fourth book, which was intended to treat of the paſſions. Excuſe the three firſt verſes; you know vanity, with the Romans, is a poetical licence.

LETTER V.

Mr. GRAY to Mr. WALPOLE.

Cambridge, 1747.

I Have abundance of thanks to return you for the entertainment Mr. Spence's book has given me, which I have almoſt run over already; and I much fear (ſee what it is to make a figure) the breadth of the margin, and the neatneſs of the prints, which are far better done than one could expect, have prevailed upon me to like it far better than I did in manuſcript; for I think it

* The admirable Apoſtrophe to Mr. Weſt, ſee page 162.

not

is not the very genteel deportment of Polymetis, nor the lively wit of Myſagetes, that have at all corrupted me.

There is one fundamental fault, from whence moſt of the little faults throughout the whole ariſe. He profeſſes to neglect the Greek writers, who could have given him more inſtruction on the very heads he profeſſes to treat, than all the others put together; who does not know, that upon the Latin, the Sabine, and Hetruſcan mythology (which probably might themſelves, at a remoter period of time, owe their origin to Greece too) the Romans ingrafted almoſt the whole religion of Greece to make what is called their own? It would be hard to find any one circumſtance that is properly of their invention. In the ruder days of the republick, the pictureſque part of their religion (which is the province he has choſe, and would be thought to confine himſelf to) was probably borrowed entirely from the Tuſcans, who, as a wealthy and trading people, may be well ſuppoſed, and indeed are known, to have had the arts flouriſhing in a conſiderable degree among them. What could inform him here, but Dio. Halicarnaſſus (who expreſsly treats of thoſe times with great curioſity and induſtry) and the remains of the firſt Roman writers? The former he has neglected, as a Greek; and the latter, he ſays, were but little acquainted with the arts and

conſequently

conſequently are but of ſmall authority. In the better ages, when every temple and publick building in Rome was peopled with imported deities and heroes, and when all the artiſts of reputation they made uſe of were Greeks, what wonder, if their eyes grew familiariſed to Grecian forms and habits (eſpecially in a matter of this kind, where ſo much depends upon the imagination;) and if thoſe figures introduced with them belief of ſuch fables, as firſt gave them being, and dreſſed them out in their various attributes, it was natural then, and (I ſhould think) neceſſary, to go to the ſource itſelf, the Greek accounts of their own religion; but, to ſay the truth, I ſuſpect he was little converſant in thoſe books and that language; for he rarely quotes any but Lucian, an author that falls in every body's way, and who lived at the very extremity of that period he has ſet to his enquiries, later than any of the poets he has meddled with, and for that reaſon ought to have been regarded as but an indifferent authority; eſpecially being a Syrian too. His book (as he ſays himſelf) is, I think, rather a beginning than a perfect work; but a beginning at the wrong end: For if any body ſhould finiſh it by enquiring into the Greek mythology, as he propoſes, it will be neceſſary to read it backward.

There are ſeveral little neglects, that one might have told him of, which I noted in reading

ing it haſtily; of page 311, a diſcourſe about orange-trees, occaſioned by Virgil's *inter odoratum lauri nemus*, where he fancies the Roman Laurus to be our Laurel; though undoubtedly the Bay-tree, which is *odoratum*, and (I believe) ſtill called Lauro, or Alloro, at Rome, and that the *Malum medicum* in the Georgick is the orange; though Theophraſtus, whence Virgil borrowed it, or even Pliny whom he himſelf quotes, might convince him it is the Cedrato which he has often taſted at Florence. Page 144, is an account of Domenichino's Cardinal Virtues, and a fling at the Jeſuits, neither of which belong to them: The painting is in a church of the Barnibiti, dedicated to St. Carlo Borromeo, whoſe motto is HUMILITAS. Page 151, in a note, he ſays the old Romans did not regard Fortune as a Deity; though Servius Tullius (whom ſhe was ſaid to be in love with; nay, there was actually an affair between them) founded her temple in Foro Boario. By the way, her worſhip was Greek, and this king was educated in the family of Tarquinius Priſcus whoſe father was a Corinthian; ſo it is eaſy to conceive how early the religion of Rome might be mixed with that of Greece, &c. &c.

Dr. Middleton has ſent to me to-day a book on the Roman Senate, the ſubſtance of a diſpute between Lord Hervey and him, though it never interrupted *their* friendſhip, he ſays, and I dare ſay not.

LETTER VI.

Mr. GRAY to Mr. WALPOLE.

Cambridge, March 1, 1747.

AS one ought to be particularly careful to avoid blunders in a compliment of condolence, it would be a ſenſible ſatisfaction to me (before I teſtify my ſorrow, and the ſincere part I take in your misfortune) to know for certain, who it is I lament. I knew Zara and Selima, (Selima was it? or Fatima) or rather I knew them both together; for I cannot juſtly ſay which was which. Then as to your handſome cat, the name you diſtinguiſh her by, I am no leſs at a loſs, as well knowing one's handſome cat is always the cat one likes beſt; or, if one be alive and the other dead, it is uſually the latter that is the handſomeſt. Beſides, if the point were never ſo clear, I hope you do not think me ſo ill-bred or ſo imprudent as to forfeit all my intereſt in the ſurvivor: Oh no! I would rather ſeem to miſtake, and imagine to be ſure it muſt be the tabby one that had met with this ſad accident. Till this affair is a little better determined, you will excuſe me if I do not begin to cry:

Tempus inane peto, requiem, ſpatiumque doloris.

Which interval is the more convenient, as it gives time to rejoice with you on your new honours.

honours *. This is only a beginning; I reckon next week we ſhall hear you are a Free-maſon, or a Gormogon at leaſt. —— Heigh ho! I feel (as you to be ſure have done long ſince) that I have very little to ſay, at leaſt in proſe. Somebody will be the better for it; I do not mean you, but your Cat, *feuë Mademoiſelle Selime*, whom I am about to immortalize for one week or fortnight, as follows * * * * ‡. There's a Poem for you, it is rather too long for an Epitaph.

LETTER VII.

Mr. GRAY to Dr. WHARTON.

Stoke, June 5, 1745.

YOUR friendſhip has intereſted itſelf in my affairs ſo naturally, that I cannot help troubling you a little with a detail of them * *†. And now, my dear Wharton, why muſt I tell you a thing ſo contrary to my own wiſhes and

* Mr. Walpole was about this time elected a Fellow of the Royal Society.

‡ The reader need hardly be told, that the 4th Ode in the Collection of his Poems was inſerted in the place of theſe aſteriſks. This letter (as ſome other ſlight ones have been) is printed chiefly to mark the date of one of his compoſitions.

† The paragraph here omitted contained an account of Mr. Gray's loſs of a houſe by fire in Cornhill, and the expence he ſhould be at in rebuilding it. Though it was inſured, he could at this time ill bear to lay out the additional ſum neceſſary for the purpoſe.

yours? I believe it is impoſſible for me to ſee you in the North, or to enjoy any of thoſe agreeable hours I had flattered myſelf with. This buſineſs will oblige me to be in town ſeveral times during the ſummer, particularly in Auguſt, when half the money is to be paid; beſides the good people here would think me the moſt careleſs and ruinous of mortals, if I ſhould take ſuch a journey at this time. The only ſatisfaction I can pretend to, is that of hearing from you, and particularly at this time when I was bid to expect the good news of an encreaſe of your family. Your opinion of Diodorus is doubtleſs right; but there are things in him very curious, got out of better authorities now loſt. Do you remember the Ægyptian hiſtory, and particularly the account of the gold mines? My own readings have been cruelly interrupted: What I have been highly pleaſed with, is the new Comedy from Paris by Greſſet, called le Mechant; if you have it not, buy his works altogether in two little volumes, they are collected by the Dutch bookſellers, and conſequently contain ſome traſh; but then there are the Ver-vero, the Epiſtle to P. Bougeant, the Chartreuſe, that to his Siſter, an Ode on his Country, and another on Mediocrity, and the Sidnei, another Comedy, all which have great beauties: There is alſo a Poem lately publiſhed by Thomſon, called the Caſtle of Indolence, with

with ſome good ſtanzas in it. Mr. Maſon is my acquaintance; I liked, that Ode * much, but have found no one elſe that did. He has much fancy, little judgment, and a good deal of modeſty; I take him for a good and well-meaning creature; but then he is really in ſimplicity a child, and loves every body he meets with: He reads little or nothing; writes abundance, and that with a deſign to make his fortune by it. My beſt compliments to Mrs. Wharton and your family. Does that name include any body I am not yet acquainted with?

* Ode to a Water Nymph, publiſhed about this time in Dodſley's Miſcellany. On reading what follows, many readers, I ſuſpect, will think me as ſimple as ever, in forbearing to expunge the paragraph: But as I publiſh Mr. Gray's ſentiments of authors, as well living as dead without reſerve, I ſhould do them injuſtice, if I was more ſcrupulous with reſpect to myſelf. My friends, I am ſure, will be much amuſed with this and another paſſage hereafter of a like ſort. My enemies, if they pleaſe, may ſneer at it; and ſay (which they will very truly) that twenty-five years have made a very conſiderable abatement in my general philanthropy. Men of the world will not blame me for writing from ſo prudent a motive, as that of making my fortune by it; and yet the truth, I believe, at the time was, that I was perfectly well ſatisfied, if my publications furniſhed me with a few guineas to ſee a Play or an Opera.

LETTER VIII.

Mr. GRAY to Dr. WHARTON.

Stoke, Auguſt 19, 1748.

I Am glad you have had any pleaſure in Greſſet; he ſeems to me a truly elegant and charming writer; the Mechant is the beſt Comedy I ever read; his Edward I could ſcarce get through; it is puerile; though there are good lines, ſuch as this for example:

"Le jour d'un nouveau regne eſt le jour des ingrats."

But good lines will make any thing rather than a play: However you are to conſider this is a collection made up by the Dutch bookſellers; many things unfiniſhed, or written in his youth, or deſigned not for the world, but to make his friends laugh, as the Lutrin vivant, &c. There are two noble lines; which, as they are in the middle of an Ode to the King, may perhaps have eſcaped you.

"Le cri d'un peuple heureux eſt la ſeule elo-
"quence, Qui ſçait parler des Rois."

Which is very true, and ſhould have been a hint to himſelf not to write Odes to the King at all.

As I have nothing more to ſay at preſent, I fill my paper with the beginning of an Eſſay; what name to give it I know not; but the ſubject

ſubject is the Alliance of Education and Government: I mean to ſhew that they muſt both concur to produce great and uſeful men. I deſire your judgment upon it before I proceed any further.

* * * * *

The firſt fifty-ſeven verſes of an Ethical Eſſay accompanied this letter, which I ſhall here inſert, with about fifty lines more, all of them finiſhed in his higheſt manner. Had this noble deſign been compleated, I may, with great boldneſs, aſſert that it would have been one of the moſt capital Poems of the kind that ever appeared either in our own or any language. I am not informed how many Eſſays he meant to write upon the ſubject; nor do I believe that he had ever ſo far ſettled his plan as to determine that point: But ſince his theme was as extenſive as human nature, (an obſervation he himſelf makes in a ſubſequent letter on the *Eſprit des Loix)* it is plain the whole work would have been conſiderable in point of ſize. He was buſily employed in it at the time when M. de Monteſquieu's book was firſt publiſhed: On reading it, he ſaid the Baron had foreſtalled ſome of his beſt thoughts; and yet the reader will find, from the ſmall fragment he has left, that the two writers differ a little in one very

material point, viz. the influence of ſoil and climate on national manners *. Some time after he had thoughts of reſuming his plan, and of dedicating it, by an introductory Ode, to M. de Monteſquieu; but that great man's death, which happened in 1755, made him drop his deſign finally.

On carefully reviewing the ſcattered papers in proſe, which he writ, as hints for his own uſe in the proſecution of this work, I think it beſt to form part of them into a kind of Commentary at the bottom of the pages; they will ſerve greatly to elucidate (as far as they go) the method of his reaſoning.

* See L'Eſprit des Loix, Liv. 14. chap. 2. &c.

ESSAY I.

——— Πόταγ' ὦ γαθέ; τὰν γὰρ ἀοιδὰν
Οὔτι πω εἰς Ἀίδαν γε τὸν ἐκλελάθοντα φυλαξεῖς.

THEOCRITUS.

AS ſickly Plants betray a niggard earth,
Whoſe barren boſom ſtarves her gen'rous birth,
Nor genial warmth, nor genial juice retains
Their roots to feed, and fill their verdant veins:

And

COMMENTARY.

The Author's ſubject being (as we have ſeen) THE NECESSARY ALLIANCE BETWEEN A GOOD FORM OF GOVERNMENT AND A GOOD MODE OF EDUCATION,

IN

NOTES.

[*As ſickly Plants, &c.* l. 1] If any copies of this Eſſay would have authorized me to have made an alteration

in

And as in climes, where Winter holds his reign,
The ſoil, tho' fertile, will not teem in vain,
Forbids her gems to ſwell, her ſhades to riſe,
Nor truſts her bloſſoms to the churliſh ſkies:
So draw Mankind in vain the vital airs,
Unform'd, unfriended, by thoſe kindly cares
That health and vigour to the ſoul impart,
Spread the young thought, and warm the opening heart:
So fond inſtruction on the growing powers
Of nature idly laviſhes her ſtores,
If equal Juſtice with unclouded face
Smile not indulgent on the riſing race,

And

COMMENTARY.

IN ORDER TO PRODUCE THE HAPPINESS OF MANKIND, the Poem opens with two ſimilies; an uncommon kind of exordium: but which I ſuppoſe the Poet intentionally choſe, to intimate the analogical method he meant to purſue in his ſubſequent reaſonings. 1ſt, He aſſerts that men without education are like ſickly plants in a cold or barren ſoil, (line 1 to 5, and 8 to 12;) and, 2dly, he compares them,

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in the diſpoſition of the lines, I would, for the ſake of perſpicuity, have printed the firſt twelve in the following manner; becauſe I think the poetry would not have been in the leaſt hurt by ſuch a tranſpoſition, and the Poet's meaning would have been much more readily perceived. I put them down here for that purpoſe.

As ſickly Plants betray a niggard earth,
Whoſe barren boſom ſtarves her gen'rous birth,
Nor genial warmth, nor genial juice retains
Their roots to feed, and fill their verdant veins:

And ſcatter with a free, tho' frugal hand
Light golden ſhowers of plenty o'er the land:
But Tyranny has fix'd her empire there
To check their tender hopes with chilling fear,
And blaſt the blooming promiſe of the year.

This ſpacious animated ſcene ſurvey,
From where the rolling Orb, that gives the day,
His ſable ſons with nearer courſe ſurrounds
To either pole, and life's remoteſt bounds.
How rude ſoe'er th' exterior form we find,
Howe'er opinion tinge the varied mind,
Alike to all, the kind, impartial Heav'n
The ſparks of truth and happineſs has giv'n:
With ſenſe to feel, with memory to retain,
They follow pleaſure, and they fly from pain;
Their judgment mends the plan their fancy draws,
Th' event preſages, and explores the cauſe;

The

COMMENTARY.

them, when unbleſt with a juſt and well regulated government, to plants that will not bloſſom or bear fruit in an unkindly and inclement air (l. 5 to 9, and l. 13 to 22.) Having thus laid down the two propoſitions he means to prove,

NOTES.

So draw Mankind in vain the vital airs,
Unform'd, unfriended by thoſe kindly cares,
That health and vigour to the ſoul impart,
Spread the young thought, and warm the opening heart.
And as in climes, where Winter holds his reign,
The ſoil, tho' fertile, will not teem in vain,
Forbids her gems to ſwell, her ſhades to riſe,
Nor truſt her bloſſoms to the churliſh ſkies:
So fond Inſtruction, &c.

The ſoft returns of gratitude they know,
By fraud elude, by force repel the foe;
While mutual wiſhes, mutual woes endear
The ſocial ſmile and ſympathetic tear.

Say, then, thro' ages by what fate confin'd
To different climes ſeem different ſouls aſſign'd.
Here meaſur'd laws and philoſophic eaſe
Fix, and improve the poliſh'd arts of peace.
There induſtry and gain their vigils keep,
Command the winds, and tame th' unwilling deep.
Here force and hardy deeds of blood prevail;
There languid pleaſure ſighs in every gale.
Oft o'er the trembling nations from afar
Has Scythia breath'd the living cloud of war;
And, where the deluge burſt, with ſweepy ſway
Their arms, their kings, their gods were roll'd away.

As

COMMENTARY.

prove, he begins by examining into the characteriſticks which (taking a general view of mankind) all men have in common one with another (l. 22 to 39;) they covet pleaſure and

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[*Has Scythia breath'd, &c.* l. 47.] The moſt celebrated of the early irruptions of the Scythians into the neighbouring countries is that under the conduct of Madyes, about the year of the creation 3350, when they broke into Aſia, during the reign of Cyaxares, king of the Medes, and conqueror of the Aſſyrians, plundered it at diſcretion, and kept poſſeſſion of it during twenty-eight years. Many ſucceſſive incurſions, attended with every kind of deſolation, are enumerated by hiſtorians; particularly thoſe, in A. D. 252, during the reign of Gallus and Volunſianus, and in 261, under that of Gallienus. Under the Greek emperors alſo to mention only the years 1053 and 1191, it appears that

As oft have iſſued, hoſt impelling hoſt,
The blue-eyed myriads from the Baltic coaſt.
The proſtrate South to the Deſtroyer yields
Her boaſted titles, and her golden fields:

With

COMMENTARY.

and avoid pain (l. 31;) they feel gratitude for benefits (l. 34;) they deſire to avenge wrongs, which they effect either by force or cunning (l. 35;) they are linked to each

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that the Scythians, ſtill continued their accuſtomed ravages. In later times, the like ſpirit of ſudden and deſtructive invaſion has conſtantly prevailed; and theſe ſame Scythians, under their modern name of Tartars, have at different periods, over-run Aſia, and even ſome parts of Europe: it is ſufficient, on this point, to recall to the reader's memory the names of Gingis-Chan, Octai, and Tamerlane.

[*The blue-eyed myriads, &c.* l. 51.] The different nations of Germans, who inhabited or bordered on this coaſt, have been always diſtinguiſhed by their various emigrations in ſearch of a better ſoil and climate and of a more commodious ſettlement. The reader will readily recollect the expedition of the Teutones, who joined the Cimbri, when they invaded the Roman territories to the united amount, it is ſaid, of 300,000 fighting men; the many inroads of the Germans into Gaul, under the conduct of Arioviſtus; and the numerous irruptions, into the Roman empire, of the Suevi, the Goths, the Vandals, and laſtly of the Lombards; moſt of which nations came originally from the coaſts here mentioned. The epithet "blue-eyed" exhibits a diſtinguiſhing feature of the antient Germans; and is particularly remarked by Tacitus and Juvenal. "Truces et cærulei oculi," obſerves the former, "de Popul: German: 4." and the latter, "Cærula quis ſtupuit Germani lumina?" "Sat. 13. ver. 164."

With grim delight the Brood of winter view
A brighter day, and Heav'ns of azure hue,
Scent the new fragrance of the breathing roſe,
And quaff the pendant vintage as it grows,
Proud of the yoke, and pliant to the rod,
Why yet does Aſia dread a monarch's nod,
While European freedom ſtill withſtands
Th' encroaching tide, that drowns her leſſening lands;
And

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each other by their common feelings, and participate in ſorrow and in joy (l. 36, 37) If then all the human ſpecies agree in ſo many moral particulars, whence ariſes the diverſity of national characters? This queſtion the Poet puts at line 38, and dilates upon to l. 64. Why, ſays he, have ſome nations ſhewn a propenſity to commerce and induſtry; others to war and rapine; others to eaſe and pleaſure? (l. 42 to 46.) Why have the Northern people overſpread, in all ages, and prevailed over the Southern? (l. 46 to 58)

NOTES.

[*With grim delight*, &c. l. 54.] It may not be improper here, after admiring the noble vein of poetical expreſſion and imagery which adorns this deſcription, to relate an incident in itſelf curious, which ſhews the propriety of it. The Normans, who came originally from Norway and Scandinavia, having, after a century of ravages, ſettled themſelves in Neuſtria (ſince called Normandy) in 1012, were invited into the ſouthern parts of Italy, in the year 1018, by Gaimar prince of Salerno. The Ambaſſadors, by his particular direction, carried with them a quantity of Citrons, and of other rare fruits, as the moſt alluring proof of the mildneſs of the climate. He thought (and the event ſhowed he was right in thinking ſo) that this "Brood of winter," delighted with the taſte and fragrance of theſe delicacies, would the more readily conſent to his propoſal. [See Leo Oſtienſis in his "Chron: Caſſin:" and Petavius, "Rationarium

And ſees far off with an indignant groan
Her native plains, and Empires once her own.
Can opener ſkies and ſuns of fiercer flame
O'erpower the fire, that animates our frame;
As lamps, that ſhed at eve a chearful ray,
Fade and expire beneath the eye of day?
Need we the influence of the Northern ſtar
To ſtring our nerves and ſteel our hearts to war?
And, where the face of nature laughs around,
Muſt ſick'ning virtue fly the tainted ground?
Unmanly thought! what ſeaſons can controul,
What fancied zone can circumſcribe the ſoul,
Who, conſcious of the ſource from whence ſhe ſprings,
By reaſon's light, on reſolution's wings,
Spite of her frail companion, dauntleſs goes
O'er Lybia's deſerts and thro' Zembla's ſnows?
She bids each ſlumb'ring energy awake,
Another touch, another temper take,
Suſpends th' inferior laws, that rule our clay:
The ſtubborn elements confeſs her ſway;
Their little wants, their low deſires, refine,
And raiſe the mortal to a height divine.

Not

COMMENTARY.

58) Why has Aſia been, time out of mind, the ſeat of deſpotiſm, and Europe that of freedom? (l. 59 to 64.) Are we from theſe inſtances to imagine men neceſſarily enſlaved to the inconveniences of the climate where they were born? (l. 64 to 72) Or are we not rather to ſuppoſe there is a natu-

ral

NOTES.

rium Temp: pars: prim: lib: viii."] Mr. Gray's judgment, in what remains to us of this eſſay, is very remarkable. He borrows from poetry his imagery, his ſimilies, and his expreſſions; but his thoughts are taken, as the nature of the Poem requires, from hiſtory and obſervation.

Not but the human fabrick from the birth
Imbibes a flavour of its parent earth.
As various tracts enforce a various toil,
The manners ſpeak the idiom of the ſoil.
An iron race the mountain-cliffs maintain,
Foes to the gentler genius of the plain:
For where unwearied ſinews muſt be found
With ſide-long plough to quell the flinty ground,
To turn the torrent's ſwift deſcending flood,
To brave the ſavage ruſhing from the wood,
What wonder, if to patient valour train'd
They guard with ſpirit, what by ſtrength they gain'd?
And while their rocky ramparts round they ſee,
The rough abode of want and liberty,
(As lawleſs force from confidence will grow)
Inſult the plenty of the vales below?
What wonder in the ſultry climes, that ſpread
Where Nile redundant o'er his ſummer-bed

From

COMMENTARY.

ral ſtrength in the human mind, that is able to vanquiſh and break through them? (l. 72 to 84) It is confeſt, however, that men receive an early tincture from the ſituation they are placed in, and the climate which produces them (l. 84 to 88.) Thus the inhabitants of the mountains, inured to labour and patience, are naturally trained to war (l. 88 to 96); while thoſe of the plain are more open to any attack, and ſoftened by eaſe and plenty (l. 96 to 99). Again, the Ægyptians, from the nature of their ſituation, might be the inventors of home-navigation, from a neceſſity of keeping up an intercourſe between their towns during the inundation of the Nile (l. 99 to ***). Thoſe perſons would naturally have the firſt turn to commerce, who inhabited a barren coaſt like the Tyrians, and were perſecuted by ſome neighbouring tyrant; or were drove

to

From his broad boſom life and verdure flings,
And broods o'er Ægypt with his wat'ry wings,
If with advent'rous oar and ready ſail
The duſky people drive before the gale ;
Or on frail floats to neighb'ring cities ride,
That riſe and glitter o'er the ambient tide

LET-

COMMENTARY.

to take refuge on ſome ſhoals, like the Venetian and Hollander ; their diſcovery of ſome rich iſland, in the infancy of the world, deſcribed. The Tartar hardened to war by his rigorous climate and paſtoral life, and by his diſputes for water and herbage in a country without land marks, as alſo by ſkirmiſhes between his rival clans, was conſequently fitted to conquer his rich ſouthern neighbours, whom eaſe and luxury had enervated : Yet this is no proof that liberty and valour may not exiſt in ſouthern climes, ſince the Syrians and Carthaginians

NOTES.

[*And broods o'er Ægypt, &c.* l. 103.] The image ſeems to be taken from the figure of Jupiter Pluvius, as repreſented on the Antonine Pillar : But the whole paſſage riſes to a height beyond the powers either of ſculpture or painting to aſcend. The critic would, with difficulty, find any deſcription in antiquity, which exceeds this in point of true ſublimity.

[*That riſe and glitter, &c.* l. 107.] The foregoing account of the river Nile, while it is embelliſhed with all the graces of deſcription, is given at the ſame time in exact conformity to truth and reality ; as the reader will obſerve from the following citation. — " Le Nil portoit par tout la fecon-
" dite avec ſes eaux ſalutaires, uniſſoit les villes entre elles,
" et la grande mer avec la mer rouge, entretenoit le com-
" merce au dedans et au dehors du Royaume, et le fortifioit
" contre l' ennemi : de ſorte qu' il etoit tout enſemble et le
" nourricier, et le defenſeur de l' Egypte. On lui abandon-
" noit la campagne : mais les villes, rehauſſees avec des tra-
" vaux immenſes. et s' elevant comme des iſles au milieu des
" eaux, regardoient avec joye de cette hauteur toute la plaine
" inondee et tout enſemble fertiliſee par le Nil." *Boſſuet, Diſc. ſur l' Hiſt. trois part.*

thaginians gave noble inſtances of both; and the Arabians carried their conqueſts as far as the Tartars. Rome alſo (for many centuries) repulſed thoſe very nations, which, when ſhe grew weak, at length demoliſhed * her extenſive empire.

NOTES.

* The reader will perceive that the Commentary goes further than the Text. The reaſon for which is, that the Editor found it ſo on the paper from which he formed that comment; and as the thoughts ſeemed to be thoſe which Mr. Gray would have next graced with the harmony of his numbers, he held it beſt to give them in continuation. There are other maxims on different papers, all apparently relating to the ſame ſubject, which are too excellent to be loſt; theſe therefore (as the place in which he meant to employ them cannot be aſcertained) I ſhall ſubjoin to this note under the title of Detached Sentiments.

" Man is a creature not capable of cultivating his mind but in ſociety, and in that only where he is not a ſlave to the neceſſities of life.

Want is the mother of the inferior arts, but eaſe that of the finer; as eloquence, policy, morality, poetry, ſculpture, painting, architecture, which are the improvements of the former.

The climate inclines ſome nations to contemplation and pleaſure; others to hardſhip, action, and war; but not ſo as to incapacitate the former for courage and diſcipline, or the latter for civility, politeneſs, and works of genius.

It is the proper work of education and government united to redreſs the faults that ariſe from the ſoil and air.

The principal drift of education ſhould be to make men *think* in the Northern climates, and to *act* in the Southern.

The different ſteps and degrees of education may be compared to the artificer's operations upon marble; it is one thing to dig it out of the quarry, and another to ſquare it; to give it gloſs and luſtre, call forth every beautiful ſpot and vein, ſhape it into a column, or animate it into a ſtatue.

To a native of free and happy governments, his country is always dear;

" He loves his old hereditary trees." COWLEY.

While

While the ſubject of a tyrant has no country; he is therefore ſelfiſh and baſe-minded; he has no family, no poſterity, no deſire of fame: or, if he has, of one that turns not on its proper object.

Any nation that wants publick ſpirit, neglects education, ridicules the deſire of fame, and even of virtue and reaſon, muſt be ill governed.

Commerce changes intirely the fate and genius of nations, by communicating arts and opinions, circulating money, and introducing the materials of luxury; ſhe firſt opens and poliſhes the mind, then corrupts and enervates both that and the body.

Thoſe invaſions of effeminate ſouthern nations by the warlike northern people, ſeem (in ſpite of all the terror, miſchief, and ignorance which they brought with them) to be neceſſary evils; in order to revive the ſpirit of mankind, ſoftened and broken by the arts of commerce, to reſtore them to their native liberty and equality, and to give them again the power of ſupporting danger and hardſhip; ſo a comet with all the horrors that attend it, as it paſſes through our ſyſtem, brings a ſupply of warmth and light to the ſun, and of moiſture to the air.

The doctrine of Epicurus is ever ruinous to ſociety: It had its riſe when Greece was declining, and perhaps haſtened its diſſolution, as alſo that of Rome; it is now propagated in France and in England, and ſeems likely to produce the ſame effect in both.

One principal characteriſtic of vice in the preſent age is the contempt of fame.

Many are the uſes of good fame to a generous mind: it extends our exiſtence and example into future ages; continues and propagates virtue, which otherwiſe would be as ſhort-lived as our frame; and prevents the prevalence of vice in a generation more corrupt even than our own. It is impoſſible to conquer that natural deſire we have of being remembered; even criminal ambition and avarice, the moſt ſelfiſh of all paſſions, would wiſh to leave a name behind them."

I find alſo among theſe papers a ſingle couplet much too beautiful to be loſt, though the place where he meant to introduce it cannot be aſcertained; it muſt however, have made

made a part of ſome deſcription of the effect which the reformation had on our national manners:

When Love could teach a monarch to be wiſe,
And Goſpel-light firſt dawn'd from BULLEN's Eyes.

Thus, with all the attention that a connoiſſeur in painting employs in collecting every ſlight outline as well as finiſhed drawing which led to the completion of ſome capital picture, I have endeavoured to preſerve every fragment of this great poetical deſign. It ſurely deſerved this care, as it was one of the nobleſt which Mr. Gray ever attempted; and alſo, as far as he carried it into execution, the moſt exquiſitely finiſhed. That he carried it no further is, and muſt ever be, a moſt ſenſible loſs to the republick of letters.

LETTER IX.

Mr. GRAY to Dr. WHARTON.

Cambridge, March 9, 174$\frac{8}{9}$.

YOU aſk for ſome account of books. The principal I can tell you of is a work of the Preſident Monteſquieu, the labour of twenty years; it is called L'Eſprit des Loix, 2 vols. 4to, printed at Geneva. He lays down the principles on which are founded the three ſorts of government, Deſpotiſm, the limited Monarchy, and the Republican; and ſhews how from theſe are deduced the laws and cuſtoms by which they are guided and maintained; the education proper to each form; the influence of climate, ſituation, religion, &c. on the minds of particular nations and on their policy. The ſubject, you ſee, is as extenſive as mankind; the thoughts

thoughts perfectly new, generally admirable as they are juſt, ſometimes a little too refined. In ſhort, there are faults, but ſuch as an ordinary man could never have committed. The ſtyle very lively and conciſe (conſequently ſometimes obſcure); it is the gravity of Tacitus, whom he admires, tempered with the gaiety and fire of a Frenchman. The time of night will not ſuffer me to go on; but I will write again in a week.

LETTER X.

Mr. GRAY to Dr. WHARTON.

Cambridge, April 25, 1749.

I Perceive that ſecond parts are as bad to write as they can be to read; for this, which you ought to have had a week after the firſt, has been a full month in coming forth. The ſpirit of lazineſs (the ſpirit of the place) begins to poſſeſs even me, who have ſo long declaimed againſt it; yet has it not ſo prevailed, but that I feel that diſcontent with myſelf, that *ennui*, that ever accompanies it in its beginnings. Time will ſettle my conſcience; time will reconcile me to this languid companion: We ſhall ſmoke, we ſhall tipple, we ſhall doze together: We ſhall have our little jokes like other people, and our old ſtories: Brandy will finiſh what

what Port began; and in a month after the time you will ſee in ſome corner of a London Evening Poſt, "Yeſterday died the Reverend "Mr. Thomas Gray, Senior Fellow of Clare-"hall, a facetious companion, and well re-"ſpected by all that knew him. His death is "ſuppoſed to have been occaſioned by a fit of "an apoplexy, being found fallen out of bed "with his head in the chamber-pot."

In the mean while, to go on with my account of new Books. Monteſquieu's work, which I mentioned before, is now publiſhing anew in two volumes 8vo. Have you ſeen old Crebillon's Catalina, a Tragedy, which has had a prodigious run at Paris? Hiſtorical truth is too much perverted in it, which is ridiculous in a ſtory ſo generally known; but if you can get over this, the ſentiments and verſification are fine, and moſt of the characters (particularly the principal one) painted with great ſpirit.

Mr. Birch, the indefatigable, has juſt put out a thick octavo of original papers of Queen Elizabeth's time; there are many curious things in in it, particularly letters from Sir Robert Cecil (Saliſbury) about his negotiations with Henry IV. of France, the Earl of Monmouth's odd account of Queen Elizabeth's death, ſeveral peculiarities of James I. and Prince Henry, &c. and above all an excellent account of the ſtate of France, with characters of the King, his

court and miniſtry, by Sir George Carew, ambaſſador there. This, I think, is all new worth mentioning, that I have ſeen or heard of; except a Natural Hiſtory of Peru, in Spaniſh, printed at London, by Don —— ſomething, a man of learning, ſent thither by that court on purpoſe.

You aſk after my chronology. It was begun, as I told you, almoſt two years ago, when I was in the midſt of Diogenes Laertius and his Philoſophers, as a proœmium to their works. My intention in forming this table was not ſo much for publick events, though theſe too have a column aſſigned them, but rather in a literary way to compare the time of all great men, their writings, and their tranſactions. I have brought it from the 30th Olympiad, where it begins, to the 113th; that is, 332 years *. My only modern aſſiſtants were Marſham, Dodwell and Bentley.

I have ſince that read Pauſanias and Athenæus all through, and Æſchylus again. I am now in Pindar and Lyſias; for I take verſe and proſe together like bread and cheeſe.

* This laborious work was formed much in the manner of the Preſident Henault's Hiſtoire de France. Every page conſiſted of nine columns; one for the Olympiad, the next for the Archons, the third for the publick affairs of Greece, the three next for the Philoſophers, and the three laſt for Poets, Hiſtorians and Orators. I do not find it carried further than the date above-mentioned.

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LETTER XI.

Mr. GRAY to Dr. WHARTON.

Cambridge, Auguſt 8, 1749.

I Promiſed Dr. Keene long ſince to give you an account of our magnificences here *; but the news papers and he himſelf in perſon have got the ſtart of my indolence, ſo that by this time you are well acquainted with all the events that adorned that week of wonders. Thus much I may venture to tell you, becauſe it is probable nobody elſe has done it, that our * * * *'s zeal and eloquence ſurpaſſed all power of deſcription. Veſuvio in an eruption was not more violent than his utterance, nor (ſince I am at my mountains) Pelion, with all its pine-trees in a ſtorm of wind, more impetuous than his action; and yet the Senate-houſe ſtill ſtands, and (I thank God) we are all ſafe and well at your ſervice. I was ready to ſink for him, and ſcarce dared to look about me, when I was ſure it was all over; but ſoon found I might have ſpared my confuſion; all joined to applaud him. Every thing was quite right; and I dare ſwear, not three people here but think him a model of oratory; for all the Duke's little court came with a reſolution to be pleaſed; and when the

* The Duke of Newcaſtle's Inſtallation as Chancellor of the Univerſity.

tone

tone was once given, the univerſity, who ever wait for the judgment of their betters, ſtruck into it with an admirable harmony: for the reſt of the performances, they were juſt what they uſually are. Every one, while it laſted, was very gay and very buſy in the morning, and very owliſh and very tipſy at night: I make no exceptions from the Chancellor to Blue-coat. Maſon's Ode was the only entertainment that had any tolerable elegance; and, for my own part, I think it (with ſome little abatements) uncommonly well on ſuch an occaſion. Pray let me know your ſentiments; for doubtleſs you have ſeen it. The author of it grows apace into my good graces, as I know him more; he is very ingenious with great good nature and ſimplicity; a little vain, but in ſo harmleſs and ſo comical a way, that it does not offend one at all; a little ambitious, but withal ſo ignorant in the world and its ways, that this does not hurt him in one's opinion; ſo ſincere and ſo undiſguiſed, that no mind with a ſpark of generoſity, would ever think of hurting him, he lies ſo open to injury; but ſo indolent, that if he cannot overcome this habit, all his good qualities will ſignify nothing at all. After all, I like him ſo well, I could wiſh you knew him.

LET-

LETTER XII.

Mr. GRAY to his MOTHER.

Cambridge, Nov. 7, 1749.

THE unhappy news I have juſt received from you, equally ſurpriſes and afflicts me *. I have loſt a perſon I lov'd very much, and have been uſed to from my infancy; but am much more concerned for your loſs, the circumſtances of which I forbear to dwell upon, as you muſt be too ſenſible of them yourſelf; and will, I fear, more and more need a conſolation that no one can give, except He who has preſerved her to you, ſo many years, and at laſt, when it was his pleaſure, has taken her from us to himſelf: and perhaps, if we reflect upon what ſhe felt in this life, we may look upon this as an inſtance of his goodneſs both to her and to thoſe that loved her. She might have languiſhed many years before our eyes in a continual increaſe of pain, and totally helpleſs; ſhe might have long wiſhed to end her miſery without being able to attain it; or perhaps even loſt all ſenſe, and yet continued to breathe; a ſad ſpectacle to ſuch as muſt have felt more for her

* The death of his aunt, Mrs. Mary Antrobus, who died the 5th of November, and was buried in a vault in Stoke church-yard near the chancel door, in which alſo his mother and himſelf (according to the direction in his will) were afterwards buried.

than ſhe could have done for herſelf. However you may deplore your own loſs, yet think that ſhe is eaſy and happy; and has now more occaſion to pity us than we her. I hope, and beg, you will ſupport yourſelf with that reſignation we owe to him, who gave us our being for our good, and who deprives us of it for the ſame reaſon. I would have come to you directly, but you do not ſay whether you deſire I ſhould or not; if you do, I beg I may know it, for there is nothing to hinder me, and I am in very good health.

LETTER XIII.

Mr. GRAY to Dr. WHARTON.

Stoke, Auguſt 9, 1750.

ARISTOTLE ſays (one may write Greek to you without ſcandal) that Οἱ τοποι οὐ διαλυουσι την φιλίαν ἁπλῶς, ἀλλὰ τὴν ἐνέρξειαν· ὃ ἀνδ' χρόνιος ἡ ἀπουσία γόνηται καὶ τῆς φιλίας δοκεῖ λήθην ποιεῖν. Ὅθεν ἔιρηται

Πολλὰς δὴ φιλίας ἀπροσηγορία διέλυσεν.

But Ariſtotle may ſay whatever he pleaſes, I do not find myſelf at all the worſe for it. I could indeed wiſh to refreſh my Ἐνέρξια a little at Durham by the ſight of you; but when is there a probability of my being ſo happy? It concerned me greatly when I heard the other day that your aſthma

aſthma continued at times to afflict you, and that you were often obliged to go into the country to breathe; you cannot oblige me more than by giving me an account both of the ſtate of your body and mind: I hope the latter is able to keep you chearful and eaſy in ſpite of the frailties of its companion. As to my own, it can neither do one nor the other; and I have the mortification to find my ſpiritual part the moſt infirm thing about me. You have doubtleſs heard of the loſs I have had in Dr. Middleton, whoſe houſe was the only eaſy place one could find to converſe in at Cambridge: For my part I find a friend ſo uncommon a thing, that I cannot help regretting even an old acquaintance, which is an indifferent likeneſs of it; and tho' I do not approve the ſpirit of his books, methinks 'tis pity the world ſhould loſe ſo rare a thing as a good writer *.

My ſtudies cannot furniſh a recommendation of many new books to you. There is a defence "de l'Eſprit de Loix," by Monteſquieu himſelf; it has ſome lively things in it, but is very ſhort, and his adverſary appears to be ſo mean a bigot that he deſerved no anſwer. There are three volumes in 4to of "Hiſtoire du Cabinet du Roy," by Meſſrs. Buffons and d'Aubenton; the firſt is a man of character, but I

* Mr. Gray uſed to ſay, that good writing not only required great parts, but the very beſt of thoſe parts.

am told has hurt it by this work. It is all a ſort of introduction to natural hiſtory; the weak part of it is a love of ſyſtem which runs through it; the moſt contrary thing in the world to a ſcience entirely grounded upon experiments, and which has nothing to do with vivacity of imagination*. However I cannot help commending the general view which he gives of the face of the earth, followed by a particular one of all the known nations, their peculiar figure and manners, which is the beſt epitome of geography I ever met with, and written with ſenſe and elegance; in ſhort, theſe books are well worth turning over. The Memoirs of the Abbé de Mongon, in five vols. are highly commended, but I have not ſeen them. He was engaged in ſeveral embaſſies to Germany, England, &c. during the courſe of the late war. The Preſident Henault's 'Abregé Chronologique de l'Hiſtoire de France,' I believe I have before mentioned to you as a very good book of its kind.

* * * * *

About this time Mr. Gray had put his laſt hand to his celebrated Elegy in a Country Church-yard, and had communicated it to his friend Mr. Walpole, whoſe good taſte was too

* One cannot therefore help lamenting, that Mr. Gray let his imagination lie dormant ſo frequently, in order to apply himſelf to this very ſcience.

much

much charmed with it to ſuffer him to with-hold the ſight of it from his acquaintance; accordingly it was ſhewn about for ſome time in manuſcript, (as Mr. Gray intimates in the ſubſequent letter to Dr. Wharton) and received with all the applauſe it ſo juſtly merited. Amongſt the reſt of the faſhionable world, for to theſe only it was at preſent communicated, Lady Cobham, who now lived at the manſion-houſe at Stoke-Pogis, had read and admired it. She wiſhed to be acquainted with the author; accordingly her relation, Miſs Speed, and Lady Schaub, then at her houſe, undertook to bring this about by making him the firſt viſit. He happened to be from home, when the Ladies arrived at his Aunt's ſolitary manſion; and, when he returned, was ſurprized to find, on one of his papers in the parlour where he uſually read, the following note: "Lady Schaub's "compliments to Mr. Gray; ſhe is ſorry not "to have found him at home, to tell him that "Lady Brown is very well." This neceſſarily obliged him to return the viſit, and ſoon after induced him to compoſe a ludicrous account of this little adventure for the amuſement of the Ladies in queſtion. He wrote it in ballad meaſure, and entitled it a Long Story: when it was handed about in manuſcript, nothing could be more various than the opinions concerning it; by ſome it was thought a maſter-piece of original humour, by others a wild and fantaſtick

farrago; and when it was publiſhed, the ſentiments of good judges were equally divided about it. How it came to be printed I ſhall mention hereafter; and alſo inform the reader why Mr. Gray rejected it in the collection which he himſelf made of his Poems: in the mean-while, as I think it ought to have a place in theſe Memoirs, for reaſons too obvious to inſiſt upon, I ſhall beg leave to preface it with my own idea of the author's peculiar vein of humour; which, with my notes on the piece itſelf, may perhaps account in ſome ſort for the variety of opinions which people of acknowledged taſte have formed concerning it.

Mr. Gray had not (in my opinion) either in his converſation or writing much of what is called *pure* humour; it was always ſo much blended either with wit, fancy, or his own peculiar character, that it became equivocal, and hence not adapted to pleaſe generally: It had more of the manner of Congreve than Addiſon; and we know where one perſon reliſhes my Lady Wiſhfort, there are thouſands that admire Sir Roger de Coverley: It will not however hence follow, that Lady Wiſhfort is ill drawn; for my own part, I think it one of the moſt entertaining characters that ever was written. I know, however, that it is commonly thought extravagant and unnatural; and I believe it is true, that no woman ever exiſted that had ſo much

much folly and affectation, and at the ſame time ſo much wit and fancy; yet every one ſees that were this fancy and wit taken away, her character would become inſipid, in proportion as it became more natural; ſo that, in this and other inſtances, *if Congreve's fools were fools indeed*, they would, by being *true* characters, ceaſe to be *entertaining* ones. It may be further obſerved on the ſubject of humour, that it may and ought to be divided into ſeveral ſpecies: there is one ſort, that of Terence's, which ſimply pleaſes without forcing a ſmile; another, like Mr. Addiſon's, which not only pleaſes, but makes us ſmile into the bargain. Shakeſpeare's, Swift's, Congreve's, and Prior's uſually go further, and make us laugh: I infer not from hence that this latter ſort is the beſt: I only aſſert, that however it may be mixt with other ingredients, it ought alſo to be called Humour. The critick, however, who judges by rule, and who will not be pleaſed unleſs legitimately, will be apt to condemn this ſpecies of mixt humour; and the common reader will not always have either wit or imagination enough to comprehend or taſte it. But I have ſaid Mr. Gray not only mixed wit and fancy with his humour, but alſo his own particular character; and being naturally delicate, and at times even faſtidious, his humour generally took the ſame caſt; and would therefore be only reliſhed by ſuch of his

friends, who, conſcious of his ſuperior excellencies, thought this defect not only pardonable but entertaining, which a character of this ſort (being humorous in itſelf) always is, when it is not carried to any offenſive extreme. Yet as this obſervation relates only to his converſation and familiar letters, (for to theſe only it can be applied) I have no occaſion to inſiſt on it further; and ſhall only add, that whatever the generality of readers may think of Mr. Gray's talent in this way, there will always be ſome, and thoſe far from the loweſt claſs, to whom it will appear excellent: for humour may be true, when it ceaſes to be pure or unmixt, if the ingredients which go to its compoſition be true alſo. Falſe wit and a wild fancy would debaſe the beſt humour in the world, as they frequently do in Rabelais and Sterne (without taking more exceptionable matters into conſideration;) but when genuine, they ſerve to heighten and embelliſh it.

A LONG STORY.

IN Britain's iſle, no matter where,
(a) An antient pile of building ſtands:
The Huntingdons and Hattons there
Employ'd the pow'r of Fairy hands.

To

(a) The manſion-houſe at Stoke-Pogis, then in poſſeſſion of Viſcounteſs Cobham. The ſtyle of building, which we now call Queen Elizabeth's, is here admirably deſcribed, both with

To raiſe the cieling's fretted height,
Each pannel in achievements cloathing,
Rich windows that exclude the light,
And paſſages, that lead to nothing.

Full oft within the ſpacious walls,
When he had fifty Winters o'er him,
(b) My grave Lord Keeper led the brawls;
The ſeal and maces danc'd before him.

His buſhy beard, and ſhoe-ſtrings green,
His high-crown'd hat, and ſattin doublet,
Mov'd the ſtout heart of England's Queen,
Though Pope and Spaniard could not trouble it.

What, in the very firſt beginning!
Shame of the verſifying tribe!
Your hiſt'ry whither are you ſpinning!
Can you do nothing but deſcribe?

A houſe there is (and that's enough)
From whence one fatal morning iſſues
(c) A brace of warriors, not in buff,
But ruſtling in their ſilks and tiſſues.

The

with regard to its beauties and defects; and the third and fourth ſtanzas delineates the fantaſtick manners of her time with equal truth and humour. The houſe formerly belonged to the Earls of Huntingdon and the family of Hatton.

(b) Sir Chriſtopher Hatton, promoted by Queen Elizabeth for his graceful perſon and fine dancing G—Brawls were a ſort of figure-dancing then in vogue, and probably deemed as elegant as our modern Cotillons, or ſtill more modern Quadrilles.

(c) The reader is already apprized who theſe Ladies were; the two deſcriptions are prettily contraſted; and no-

The firſt came cap-a-pee from France,
Her conqu'ring deſtiny fulfilling,
Whom meaner beauties eye aſkance,
And vainly ape her art of killing.

The other Amazon kind heav'n
Had arm'd with ſpirit, wit, and ſatire:
But Cobham had the poliſh giv'n,
And tip'd her arrows with good nature.

To celebrate her eyes, her air,——
Coarſe panegyricks would but teaze her,
Meliſſa is her *Nom de Guerre*.
Alas, who would not wiſh to pleaſe her!

With bonnet blue and capuchine,
And aprons long, they hid their armour,
And veil'd their weapons, bright and keen,
In pity to the country farmer.

Fame, in the ſhape of *(d)* Mr. P—t,
(By this time all the pariſh know it)
Had told, that thereabouts there lurk'd
A wicked Imp they call a Poet:

Who prowl'd the country far and near,
Bewitch'd the children of the peaſants,
Dried up the cows, and lam'd the dear,
And ſuck'd the eggs, and kill'd the pheaſants.

My

thing can be more happily turned than the compliment to Lady Cobham in the eighth ſtanza.

(d) I have been told that this Gentleman, a neighbour and acquaintance of Mr. Gray's in the country, was much diſpleaſed at the liberty here taken with his name; yet, ſurely, without any great reaſon.

My Lady heard their joint petition,
Swore by her coronet and ermine,
She'd iſſue out her high commiſſion
To rid the manor of ſuch vermin.

The Heroines undertook the taſk,
Thro' lanes unknown, o'er ſtiles they ventur'd,
Rap'd at the door, nor ſtay'd to aſk,
But bounce into the parlour enter'd.

Each hole and cupboard they explore,
Each creek and cranny of his chamber,
Run hurry-ſkurry round the floor,
And o'er the bed and teſter clamber;

The trembling family they daunt,
They flirt, they ſing, they laugh, they tattle,
Rummage his Mother, pinch his Aunt,
And up ſtairs in a whirl-wind rattle.

Into the drawers and china pry,
Papers and books, a huge imbroglio!
Under a tea-cup he might lie,
Or creaſed, like dogs-ears, in a folio.

On the firſt marching of the troops,
The Muſes, hopeleſs of his pardon,
Convey'd him underneath their hoops
To a ſmall cloſet in the garden.

So Rumour ſays: (Who will, believe,)
But that they left the door a-jar,
Where ſafe and laughing in his ſleeve,
He heard the diſtant din of war.

Short was his joy. He little knew
The pow'r of Magick was no fable;

Out

Out of the window, whiſk, they flew,
(e) But left a ſpell upon the table.

The words too eager to unriddle,
The Poet felt a ſtrange diſorder:
Tranſparent bird-lime form'd the middle,
And chains inviſible the border.

So cunning was the Apparatus,
The powerful pot-hooks did ſo move him,
That, will he, nill he, to the Great-houſe
He went, as if the Devil drove him.

(f) Yet

(e) Fancy is here ſo much blended with the humour, that I believe the two ſtanzas, which ſucceeded this line, are amongſt thoſe which are the leaſt reliſhed by the generality. The deſcription of the ſpell, I know, has appeared to many perſons abſolutely unintelligible: yet if the reader adverts to that peculiar idea which runs through the whole, I imagine the obſcurity complained of will be removed. An incident, we ſee, ſo ſlight as the ſimple matter of fact, required ſomething like machinery to enliven it: Accordingly the author choſe, with propriety enough, to employ for that purpoſe thoſe notions of witchcraft, ghoſts, and enchantment, which prevailed at the time when the manſion-houſe was built. He deſcribes himſelf as a dæmon of the loweſt claſs, *a wicked imp who lam'd the deer*, &c. againſt whoſe malevolent power Lady Cobham (the Gloriana of the piece) employs two ſuperior enchantreſſes. Congruity of imagery therefore, required the card they left upon the table to be converted into a ſpell. Now all the old writers, on theſe ſubjects, are very minute in deſcribing the materials of ſuch taliſmans. Hence, therefore, his groteſque idea of a compoſition of tranſparent bird-lime, edged with inviſible chains, in order to catch and draw him to the tribunal. Without going further for examples of this kind of imagery than the Poet's own works, let me inſtance two paſ-

ſages

(f) Yet on his way (no ſign of grace,
For folks in fear are apt to pray)
To Phœbus he prefer'd his caſe,
And beg'd his aid that dreadful day.

The Godhead wou'd have back'd his quarrel;
But with a bluſh, on recollection,
Own'd, that his quiver and his laurel
'Gainſt four ſuch eyes were no protection.

The Court was ſate, the Culprit there,
Forth from their gloomy manſions creeping
(g) The Lady Janes and Joans repair,
And from the gallery ſtand peeping:

Such

ſages of the ſerious kind, ſimilar to this ludicrous one. In his Ode, entitled the Bard,

"Above, below, the roſe of ſnow, &c."

And, again, in the Fatal Siſters,

"See the grieſly texture grow."

It muſt, however, be allowed, that no perſon can fully reliſh this burleſque, who is not much converſant with the old romance-writers, and with the Poets who formed themſelves on their model.

(f) The humour of this and the following ſtanza is more pure, and conſequently more obvious. It might have been written by Prior, and the wit at the end is much in his beſt manner.

(g) Here Fancy is again uppermoſt, and ſoars as high on her comic, as on another occaſion ſhe does on her lyric wing; For now a Chorus of ghoſtly old women of quality come to give ſentence on the culprit Poet, juſt as the ſpirits of Cadwallo, Urien, and Hoel join the Bard in dreadful ſymphony to denounce vengeance on Edward I. The route

of

Such as in ſilence of the night
Come (ſweep) along ſome winding entry.
(b) Styack has often ſeen the ſight)
Or at the chapel-door ſtand centry:

(i) In peaked hoods and mantles tarniſh'd,
Sour viſages, enough to ſcare ye,
High dames of honour once, that garniſh'd
The drawing room of fierce Queen Mary!

The Peereſs comes. The audience ſtare,
And doff their hats with due ſubmiſſion:
She curt'ſies, as ſhe takes her chair,
To all the people of condition.

The Bard with many an artful fib,
Had in imagination fenc'd him,
Diſprov'd the arguments of *(k)* Squib,
And all that *(l)* Groom could urge againſt him.

But ſoon his rhetorick forſook him,
When he the ſolemn hall had ſeen;
A ſudden fit of ague ſhook him,
He ſtood as mute as poor *(m)* Macleane.

of Fancy, we ſee, is the ſame both on the humourous and ſublime occaſion. No wonder, therefore, if either of them ſhould fail of being generally taſted.

(b) The Houſe-Keeper. G.

(i) The deſcription is here excellent, and I ſhould think would pleaſe univerſally.

(k) Groom of the Chamber. G.

(l) The Steward. G.

(m) A famous Highwayman hanged the week before. G.——This ſtanza is of the ſort where wit rather than fancy prevails, conſequently much in Prior's manner.

Yet

Yet ſomething he was heard to mutter,
" How in the Park beneath an old tree
" (Without deſign to hurt the butter,
" Or any malice to the poultry,)

" He once or twice had pen'd a ſonnet;
" Yet hop'd, that he might ſave his bacon:
" Numbers would give their oaths upon it,
" He ne'er was for a conj'rer taken."

The ghoſtly prudes with *(n)* hagged face
Already had condemned the ſinner.
My Lady roſe, and with a grace——
(o) She ſmil'd, and bid him come to dinner.

" Jeſu-Maria! Madam Bridget,
" Why, what can the Viſcounteſs mean?
(Cried the ſquare-hoods in woeful fidget)
" The times are altered quite and clean!

" Decorum's turn'd to mere civility;
" Her air and all her manners ſhew it.

(n) Haggard, *(i. e.)* the face of a witch or Hag; the epithet Haggard has been ſometimes miſtaken, as conveying the ſame idea; but it means a very different thing, viz. wild and farouche, and is taken from an unreclaimed Hawk, called an Hagard; in which its proper ſenſe the Poet uſes it finely on a ſublime occaſion:

Cloath'd in the ſable garb of woe,
With hagard eyes the Poet ſtood.
Vid. Ode 6th.

(o) Here the ſtory finiſhes; the exclamation of the Ghoſts which follows is characteriſtick of the Spaniſh manners of the age, when they are ſuppoſed to have lived; and the 500 ſtanzas, ſaid to be loſt, may be imagined to contain the remainder of their long-winded expoſtulation.

" Com-

" Commend me to her affability!
" Speak to a Commoner and Poet!"

[*Here* 500 *Stanzas are loſt.*]

And ſo God ſave our noble King,
And guard us from long-winded Lubbers,
That to eternity would ſing,
And keep my lady from her Rubbers.

LETTER XIV.

Mr. GRAY to Dr. WHARTON.

Dec. 17, 1750.

OF my houſe I cannot ſay much *, I wiſh I could; but for my heart it is no leſs yours than it has long been; and the laſt thing in the world that will throw it into tumults is a fine Lady. The verſes, you ſo kindly try to keep in countenance, were written merely to divert Lady Cobham and her family, and ſucceeded accordingly; but being ſhewed about in town are not liked there at all. Mrs. * * *, a very faſhionable perſonage, told Mr. Walpole that ſhe had ſeen a thing by a friend of his which ſhe did not know what to make of, for it aimed at every thing, and meant nothing; to which he replied, that

* The houſe he was rebuilding in Cornhill. See Letter VII. of this Section.

he

he had always taken her for a woman of ſenſe, and was very ſorry to be undeceived. On the other hand, the ſtanzas * which I now encloſe to you have had the misfortune, by Mr. Walpole's fault to be made ſtill more public, for which they certainly were never meant; but it is too late to complain. They have been ſo applauded, it is quite a ſhame to repeat it: I mean not to be modeſt; but it is a ſhame for thoſe who have ſaid ſuch ſuperlative things about them, that I cannot repeat them. I ſhould have been glad that you and two or three more people had liked them, which would have ſatisfied my ambition on this head amply. I have been this month in town, not at Newcaſtle-Houſe; but diverting myſelf among my gay acquaintance, and return to my cell with ſo much the more pleaſure. I dare not ſpeak of my future excurſion to Durham for fear of a diſappointment, but at preſent it is my full intention.

LETTER XV.

Mr. GRAY to Mr. WALPOLE.

Cambridge, Feb. 11, 1751.

AS you have brought me into a little ſort of diſtreſs, you muſt aſſiſt me, I believe, to get out of it as well as I can. Yeſterday

* Elegy in a Country Church-Yard.

I had

I had the misfortune of receiving a letter from certain gentlemen (as their bookſeller expreſſes it,) who have taken the Magazine of Magazines into their hands. They tell me that an *ingenious* Poem, called Reflections in a Country Church-Yard, has been communicated to them, which they are printing forthwith; that they are informed that the *excellent* author of it is I by name, and that they beg not only his *indulgence*, but the *honour* of his correſpondence, &c. As I am not at all diſpoſed to be either ſo indulgent, or ſo correſpondent, as they deſire, I have but one bad way left to eſcape the honour they would inflict upon me; and therefore am obliged to deſire you would make Dodſley print it immediately (which may be done in leſs than a week's time) from your copy, but without my name, in what form is moſt convenient for him, but on his beſt paper and character; he muſt correct the preſs himſelf, and print it without any interval between the ſtanzas, becauſe the ſenſe is in ſome places continued beyond them; and the title muſt be,—Elegy, written in a Country Church-Yard. If he would add a line or two to ſay it came into his hands by accident, I ſhould like it better. If you behold the Magazine of Magazines in the light that I do, you will not refuſe to give yourſelf this trouble on my account, which you have taken of your own accord before now. If Dodſley do not do this immediately, he may as well let it alone.

LET-

LETTER XVI.

Mr. GRAY to Dr. WHARTON.

Dec. 19, 1752.

HAVE you read Madame de Maintenon's Letters? They are undoubtedly genuine; they begin very early in her life, before ſhe married Scarron, and continue after the king's death to within a little while of her own: they bear all the marks of a noble ſpirit (in her adverſity particularly) of virtue and unaffected devotion; inſomuch, that I am almoſt perſuaded ſhe was actually married to Lewis the XIV. and never his Miſtreſs: and this not out of any policy or ambition, but conſcience: for ſhe was what we ſhould call a bigot, yet with great good ſenſe: In ſhort, ſhe was too good for a court. Misfortunes in the beginning of her life had formed her mind (naturally lively and impatient) to reflection and a habit of piety. She was always miſerable while ſhe had the care of Madame de Monteſpan's children; timid and very cautious of making uſe of that unlimited power ſhe roſe to afterwards, for fear of treſpaſſing on the king's friendſhip for her; and after his death not at all afraid of meeting her own.

I do not know what to ſay to you with regard to Racine; it ſounds to me as if any body ſhould fall upon Shakeſpeare, who indeed lies infinitely

infinitely more open to criticiſm of all kinds; but I ſhould not care to be the perſon that undertook it. If you do not like Athalia or Britannicus, there is no more to be ſaid, I have done.

Biſhop Hall's ſatires, called Virgidemiæ, are lately republiſhed. They are full of ſpirit and poetry; as much of the firſt as Dr. Donne, and far more of the latter: they were written at the univerſity when he was about twenty-three years old, and in Queen Elizabeth's time.

You do not ſay whether you have read the Crito*. I only recommend the dramatick part of the Phædo to you, not the argumentative. The ſubject of the Eraſtæ is good; it treats of that peculiar character and turn of mind which belongs to a true philoſopher, but it is ſhorter than one would wiſh. The Euthyphro I would not read at all.

LETTER XVII.

Mr. GRAY to Mr. WALPOLE.

Stoke, Jan. 1753.

I Am at preſent at Stoke, to which place I came at half an hour's warning upon the news I received of my mother's illneſs, and did not expect to have found her alive; but when I

* Of Plato.

arrived

arrived ſhe was much better, and continues ſo. I ſhall therefore be very glad to make you a viſit at Strawberry-hill, whenever you give me notice of a convenient time. I am ſurprized at the print †; which far ſurpaſſes my idea of London graving: The drawing it was ſo finiſhed, that I ſuppoſe it did not require all the art I had imagined to copy it tolerably. My aunts ſeeing me open your letter, took it to be a burying ticket, and aſked whether any body had left me a ring; and ſo they ſtill conceive it to be, even with all their ſpectacles on. Heaven forbid they ſhould ſuſpect it to belong to any verſes of mine, they would burn me for a poet. On my own part, I am ſatisfied, if this deſign of yours ſucceed ſo well as you intend it; and yet I know it will be accompanied with ſomething not at all agreeable to me. —— While I write this, I receive your ſecond letter.—Sure, you are not out of your wits! This I know, if you ſuffer my

† A proof print of the Cul de Lampe which Mr. Bentley deſigned for the Elegy in a Country Church-yard, and which repreſents a village-funeral; this occaſioned the pleaſant miſtake of his two aunts. The remainder of the letter relates entirely to the projected publication of Mr. Bentley's deſigns, which were printed after by Dodſley this ſame year. The latter part of it, where he ſo vehemently declares againſt having his head prefixt to that work, will appear highly characteriſtical to thoſe readers who were perſonally acquainted with Mr. Gray. The print, which was taken from an original picture, painted by Echart, in Mr. Walpole's poſſeſſion, was actually more than half engraved; but afterwards on this account ſuppreſſed.

head

head to be printed, you will infallibly put me out of mine. I conjure you immediately to put a ſtop to any ſuch deſign. Who is at the expence of engraving it, I know not; but if it be Dodſley, I will make up the loſs to him. The thing as it was, I know, will make me ridiculous enough; but to appear in proper perſon, at the head of my works, conſiſting of half a dozen ballads in thirty pages, would be worſe than the pillory. I do aſſure you, if I had received ſuch a book, with ſuch a frontiſpiece, without any warning, I believe it would have given me a palſy: Therefore I rejoice to have received this notice, and ſhall not be eaſy till you tell me that all thoughts of it are laid aſide. I am extremely in earneſt, and cannot bear even the idea.

I had written to Dodſley if I had not received yours, to tell him how little I liked the title which he meant to prefix; but your letter has put all that out of my head. If you think it neceſſary to print theſe explanations * for the uſe of people that have no eyes, I ſhould be glad they were a little altered. I am, to my ſhame, in your debt for a long letter; but I cannot think of any thing elſe till you have ſet me at eaſe on this matter.

* See the above-mentioned Deſigns, where the explanations here alluded to are inſerted.

While

* * * * *

While Mr. Bentley was employed in making the Deſigns mentioned in the preceding letter, Mr. Gray, who greatly admired not only the elegance of his fancy, but alſo the neatneſs as well as facility of his execution, began a complimentary poem to him, which I ſhall now inſert. Many readers will perhaps think the panegyrick carried too far; as I own I did when he firſt ſhewed it me. Yet it is but juſtice to declare, that the original drawings, now in Mr. Walpole's poſſeſſion, which I have ſince ſeen, are ſo infinitely ſuperior to the publiſhed engravings of them, that a perſon, who has only ſeen the latter, can by no means judge of the excellencies of the former: Beſides, there is ſo much of groteſque fancy in the Deſigns themſelves, that it can be no great matter of wonder (even if the engravers had done juſtice to them) that they failed to pleaſe univerſally. What I have ſaid in defence of the Long Story might eaſily be applied to theſe productions of the ſiſter art: But not to detain the reader from the peruſal of a fragment, many ſtanzas of which are equal in poetical merit to the beſt of his moſt finiſhed poems, I ſhall here only add that it was for the ſake of the Deſign which Mr. Bentley made for the Long Story, that Mr. Gray permitted it to be printed; yet not without clearly foreſeeing that he riſked ſomewhat by the publication of it, as he intimates

intimates in the preceding letter: and indeed the event ſhewed his judgment to be true in this particular, as it proved the leaſt popular of all his productions.

STANZAS to Mr. BENTLEY.

IN ſilent gaze the tuneful choir among,
Half pleas'd, half bluſhing let the muſe admire,
While Bentley leads her ſiſter-art along,
And bids the pencil anſwer to the lyre.

See, in their courſe, each tranſitory thought
Fix'd by his touch a laſting eſſence take;
Each dream, in fancy's airy colouring wrought,
To local ſymmetry and life awake!

The tardy rhymes that us'd to linger on,
To cenſure cold, and negligent of fame,
In ſwifter meaſures animated run,
And catch a luſtre from his genuine flame.

Ah! could they catch his ſtrength, his eaſy grace,
His quick creation, his unerring line;
The energy of Pope they might efface,
And Dryden's harmony ſubmit to mine.

But not to one in this benighted age
Is that diviner inſpiration giv'n,
That burns in Shakeſpeare's or in Milton's page,
The pomp and prodigality of heav'n.

As when conſpiring in the diamond's blaze,
The meaner gems, that ſingly charm the ſight,
Together dart their intermingled rays,
And dazzle with a luxury of light.

Enough

* Enough for me, if to ſome feeling breaſt
My lines a ſecret ſympathy *impart*;
And as their pleaſing influence *flows confeſt*,
A ſigh of ſoft reflection *heave the heart*.

* * * * *

In the March following Mr. Gray loſt that Mother, for whom, on all occaſions, we have ſeen he ſhewed ſo tender a regard. She was buried in the ſame vault where her ſiſter's remains had been depoſited more than three years before. As the inſcription on the tomb-ſtone (at leaſt the latter part of it) is undoubtedly of Mr. Gray's writing, it here would claim a place, even if it had not a peculiar pathos to recommend it, and, at the ſame time, a true inſcriptive ſimplicity.

LET-

IN THE VAULT BENEATH ARE DEPOSITED,
IN HOPE OF A JOYFUL RESURRECTION,
THE REMAINS OF
MARY ANTROBUS,
SHE DIED, UNMARRIED, NOV. V. MDCCXLIX.
AGED LXVI.

IN THE SAME PIOUS CONFIDENCE,
BESIDE HER FRIEND AND SISTER,
HERE SLEEP THE REMAINS OF
DOROTHY GRAY,
WIDOW, THE CAREFUL TENDER MOTHER
OF MANY CHILDREN, ONE OF WHOM ALONE
HAD THE MISFORTUNE TO SURVIVE HER.
SHE DIED MARCH XI. MDCCLIII.
AGED LXVII.

* A corner of the only manuſcript copy, which Mr. Gray left of this fragment, is unfortunately torn; and tho' I have

LETTER XVIII.

Mr. GRAY to Mr. MASON.

Durham, Dec. 26, 1753.

A Little while before I received your melancholy letter, I had been informed by Mr. Charles Aviſon of one of the ſad events you mention *. I know what it is to loſe perſons that one's eyes and heart have long been uſed to; and I never deſire to part with the remembrance of that loſs, nor would wiſh you ſhould. It is ſomething that you had a little time to acquaint yourſelf with the idea beforehand; and that your father ſuffered but little pain, the only thing that makes death terrible. After I have ſaid this, I cannot help expreſſing my ſurprize at the diſpoſition he has made of his affairs. I muſt (if you will ſuffer me to ſay ſo) call it great weakneſs; and yet perhaps your affliction for him is heightened by that very weakneſs; for I know it is poſſible to feel an additional ſorrow for the faults of thoſe we have loved, even where that fault has been greatly injurious to

endeavoured to ſupply the chaſm, I am not quite ſatisfied with the words which I have inſerted in the third line. I print my additions in Italics, and ſhall be much pleaſed if any reader finds a better ſupplement to this imperfect ſtanza.

* The death of my Father, and of Dr. Marmaduke Pricket, a young Phyſician of my own age, with whom I was brought up from infancy, who died of the ſame infectious fever.

ourſelves.

ourſelves. — Let me deſire you not to expoſe yourſelf to any further danger in the midſt of that ſcene of ſickneſs and death; but withdraw as ſoon as poſſible to ſome place at a little diſtance in the country; for I do not, in the leaſt, like the ſituation you are in. I do not attempt to conſole you on the ſituation your fortune is left in; if it were far worſe, the good opinion I have of you tells me, you will never the ſooner do any thing mean or unworthy of yourſelf; and conſequently I cannot pity you on this account, but I ſincerely do on the new loſs you have had of a good and friendly man, whoſe memory I honour. I have ſeen the ſcene you deſcribe, and know how dreadful it is: I know too I am the better for it. We are all idle and thoughtleſs things, and have no ſenſe, no uſe in the world any longer than that ſad impreſſion laſts; the deeper it is engraved, the better.

LETTER XIX.

Mr. GRAY to Dr. WHARTON.

Stoke, Sept. 18, 1754.

I Am glad you enter into the ſpirit of Strawberry Caſtle; it has a purity and propriety of Gothiciſm in it (with very few exceptions) that I have not ſeen elſewhere. My Lord Radnor's vagaries I ſee did not keep you from doing

juſtice to his ſituation, which far ſurpaſſes every thing near it; and I do not know a more laughing ſcene than that about Twickenham and Richmond. Dr. Akenſide, I perceive, is no conjurer in Architecture; eſpecially when he talks of the ruins of Perſepolis, which are no more Gothic than they are Chineſe. The Egyptian ſtyle (ſee Dr. Pococke, not his diſcourſes but his prints) was apparently the mother of the Greek; and there is ſuch a ſimilitude between the Egyptian and thoſe Perſian ruins, as gave Diodorus room to affirm, that the old buildings of Perſia were certainly performed by Egyptian artiſts: As to the other part of your friend's opinion, that the Gothick manner is the Saracen or Mooriſh, he has a great authority to ſupport him, that of Sir Chriſtopher Wren; and yet I cannot help thinking it undoubtedly wrong. The palaces in Spain I never ſaw but in deſcription, which gives us little or no idea of things; but the Doge's palace at Venice I have ſeen, which is in the Arabeſque manner: And the houſes of Barbary you may ſee in Dr. Shaw's book, not to mention abundance of other Eaſtern buildings in Turkey, Perſia, &c. that we have views of; and they ſeem plainly to be corruptions of the Greek architecture, broke into little parts indeed, and covered with little ornaments, but in a taſte very diſtinguiſhable from that which we call

call Gothick. There is one thing that runs through the Mooriſh buildings that an imitator would certainly have been firſt ſtruck with, and would have tried to copy; and that is the cupolas which cover every thing, baths, apartments, and even kitchens; yet who ever ſaw a Gothick cupola? It is a thing plainly of Greek original. I do not ſee any thing but the ſlender ſpires that ſerve for ſteeples, which may perhaps be borrowed from the Saracen minarets on their moſques.

I take it ill you ſhould ſay any thing againſt the Mole, it is a reflection I ſee caſt at the Thames. Do you think that rivers, which have lived in London and its neighbourhood all their days, will run roaring and tumbling about like your tramontane torrents in the North? No, they only glide and whiſper.

LETTER XX.

Mr. GRAY to Dr. WHARTON.

Cambridge, March 9, 1755.

I Do not pretend to humble any one's pride; I love my own too well to attempt it. As to mortifying their vanity, it is too eaſy and too mean a taſk for me to delight in. You are very good in ſhewing ſo much ſenſibility on my account; but be aſſured my taſte for praiſe

is not like that of children for fruit; if there were nothing but medlars and blackberries in the world, I could be very well content to go without any at all. I dare say that Mason, tho' some years younger than I, was as little elevated with the approbation of Lord * and Lord *, as I am mortified by their silence.

With regard to publishing, I am not so much against the thing itself as of publishing this Ode alone *. I have two or three more ideas in my head; what is to come of them? Must they too come out in the shape of little sixpenny slams, dropping one after another till Mr. Dodsley thinks fit to collect them with Mr. This's Song, and Mr. T'other's Epigram, into a pretty volume? I am sure Mason must be sensible of this, and therefore cannot mean what he says; neither am I quite of your opinion with regard to strophe and antistrophe §; setting aside the difficulty

* His Ode on the Progress of Poetry.

† He often made the same remark to me in conversation, which led me to form the last Ode of Caractacus in shorter stanzas: But we must not imagine that he thought the regular Pindarick method without its use; though, as he justly says, when formed in long stanzas, it does not fully succeed in point of effect on the ear: For there was nothing which he more disliked than that chain of irregular stanzas which Cowley introduced, and falsely called Pindarick; and which from the extreme facility of execution produced a number of miserable imitators. Had the regular return of Strophe, Antistrophe, and Epode no other merit than that of extreme difficulty, it ought, on this very account, to be valued; because

difficulty of execution, methinks it has little or no effect on the ear, which ſcarce perceives the regular return of metres at ſo great a diſtance from one another: to make it ſucceed, I am perſuaded the ſtanzas muſt not conſiſt of above nine lines each at the moſt. Pindar has ſeveral ſuch Odes.

* * * * *

Mr. Gray intimates, in the foregoing letter, that he had two or three more lyrical ideas in his head: One of theſe was the Bard, the exordium of which was at this time finiſhed; I ſay finiſhed, becauſe his conceptions, as well as his manner of diſpoſing them, were ſo ſingularly exact, that he had ſeldom occaſion to make many, except verbal emendations, after he had firſt committed his lines to paper. It was never his method to ſketch his general deſign in careleſs verſe *, he always finiſhed as he proceeded; this

cauſe we well know that "Eaſy writing is no eaſy reading." It is alſo to be remarked, that Mr. Congreve, who (though without any lyrical powers) firſt introduced the regular Pindarick form into the Engliſh language, made uſe of the ſhort ſtanzas which Mr. Gray here recommends.——See his Ode to the Queen: Works, vol. III. p. 438, Ed. Birm.

* I have many of his critical letters by me on my own compoſitions: Letters, which, though they would not amuſe the publick in general, contain excellent leſſons for young poets, from one of theſe I extract the following paſſage, which ſeems to explain this matter more fully: "Extreme conciſeneſs of "expreſſion, yet pure, perſpicuous, and muſical, is one of the "grand

this, though it made his execution ſlow, made his compoſitions more perfect. I think, how-

" grand beauties of lyrick poetry: This I have always aimed " at, and never could attain. The neceſſity of rhyming is one " great obſtacle to it: Another, and perhaps a ſtronger, is " that way you have choſen, of caſting down your firſt " thoughts careleſsly and at large, and then clipping them " here and there at leiſure. This method, after all poſſible " pains, will leave behind it a laxity, a diffuſeneſs. The " frame of a thought (otherwiſe well invented, well-turned, " and well-placed) is often weakened by it. Do I talk non- " ſenſe? Or do you underſtand me? I am perſuaded what I " ſay is true in my head, whatever it may be in proſe; for " I do not pretend to write proſe." Nothing can be more juſt than this remark: Yet, as I ſay above, it is a mode of writing which is only calculated for ſmaller compoſitions: But Mr. Gray, though he applied it here to an Ode, was apt to think it a general rule. Now if an epick or dramatick poet was to reſolve to finiſh every part of his work as highly as we have ſeen Mr. Gray laboured his firſt ſcene of Agrippina, I am apt to think he would tire of it as ſoon as he did; for in the courſe of ſo multifarious a work, he would find himſelf obliged to expunge ſome of the beſt written parts, in order to preſerve the unity of the whole. I know only one way to prevent this, and that was the method which Racine followed; who (as his ſon tells us, in that amuſing life, though much veſted with bigotry, which he has given us of his father) when he began a drama, diſpoſed every part of it accurately in proſe; and when he had connected all the ſcenes together, uſed to ſay, " Ma Tragedie eſt faite." (See La Vie de Jean Racine, p. 117. See alſo his ſon's other works, tom. 2d. for a ſpecimen in a firſt act of the Iphigenia in Tauris.) M. Racine, it ſeems, was an eaſy verſifier in a language in which, they ſay, it is more difficult than in ours to verſify. It certainly is ſo with regard to dramatick compoſitions. I am on this account perſuaded, that if the great Poet had written in Engliſh, he would have drawn out his firſt ſketches, not in proſe, but in careleſs blank verſe; yet this I give as mere matter of opinion.

ever

ever, that this method was only calculated to produce ſuch ſhort works as generally employed his poetical pen; and that from purſuing it, he grew tired of his larger deſigns before he had completed them. The fact ſeems to juſtify my opinion. But my principal reaſon for mentioning this at preſent, is to explain the cauſe why I have not been ſcrupulous in publiſhing ſo many of his fragments in the courſe of theſe memoirs. It would have been unpardonable in me to have taken this liberty with a deceaſed friend, had I not found his lines, as far as they went, nearly as high finiſhed as they would have been, when completed: if I am miſtaken in this, I hope the reader will rather impute it to a defect in my own Judgment, than a want of reſpect to Mr. Gray's Memory.

This conſideration, however, emboldens me to print the following fragment of an Ode in this place, which was unqueſtionably another of the ideas, alluded to in the preceding letter; ſince I find in his memorandum-book of the preceding year 1734, a ſketch of his deſign as follows: "Contraſt between the winter "paſt and coming ſpring. — Joy owing to "that viciſſitude; — many who never feel "that delight. — Sloth. — Envy. — Ambition. "How much happier the ruſtick who feels "it, though he knows not how." I print this careleſs note, in order that the reader may

may conceive the intended arrangement of the whole; who, I doubt not, will, on perusing the following beautiful stanzas, lament with me that he left it incomplete; nor will it console him for the loss, if I tell him that I have had the boldness to attempt to finish it myself, making use of some other lines and broken stanzas which he had written: But as my aim in undertaking this difficult task was merely to elucidate the Poet's general meaning, I do not think that my additions are worthy to be inserted in this place; they will find a more fit situation, if thrown amongst those notes which I shall put at the end of his Poems.

O D E.

NOW the golden Morn aloft
Waves her dew-bespangled wing,
With vermil cheek, and whisper soft
She wooes the tardy Spring:
'Till April starts, and calls around
The sleeping fragrance from the ground;
And lightly o'er the living scene
Scatters his freshest, tendereſt green.

New-born flocks, in rustick dance,
Frisking ply their feeble feet;
Forgetful of their wintry trance
The birds his presence greet:
But chief, the Sky-lark warbles high
His trembling thrilling extacy;

And

And leſſening from the dazzled ſight,
Melts into air and liquid light.

Yeſterday the ſullen year
Saw the ſnowy whirlwind fly;
Mute was the muſick of the air,
The herd ſtood drooping by:
Their raptures now, that wildly flow,
No yeſterday, nor morrow know;
'Tis man alone that joy deſcries
With forward, and reverted eyes.

Smiles on paſt Misfortune's brow,
Soft Reflection's hand can trace;
And o'er the cheek of Sorrow throw
A melancholy grace:
While Hope prolongs our happier hour;
Or deepeſt ſhades that dimly lower
And blacken round our weary way,
Gilds with a gleam of diſtant day.

Still, where roſy Pleaſure leads,
See a kindred Grief purſue;
Behind the ſteps that Miſery treads
Approaching Comfort view:
The hues of Bliſs more brightly glow,
Chaſtis'd by ſabler tints of woe;
And blended form, with artful ſtrife,
The ſtrength and harmony of life.

See the Wretch, that long has toſt
On the thorny bed of pain,
At length repair his vigour loſt,
And breathe, and walk again:

The meaneſt floweret of the vale,
The ſimpleſt note that ſwells the gale,
The common ſun, the air, the ſkies,
To Him are opening Paradiſe.

* * * * * * *

A third of theſe ideas I find in his common-place book, on the ſame page with his argument for the Bard *. I do not believe that he ever even began to compoſe the Ode itſelf; but the thought is as follows:

" All that men of power can do for men of " genius is to leave them at their liberty, com- " pared to birds that, when confined to a cage, " do but regret the loſs of their freedom in me- " lancholy ſtrains, and loſe the luſcious wild- " neſs and happy luxuriance of their notes " which uſed to make the woods reſound."

Thoſe who are converſant in the arrangement of a lyrical compoſition, will eaſily perceive, from this ſhort argument, that the Ode would have opened with the ſimile; which, when adorned with thoſe " thoughts that breathe and words that burn," that Mr. Gray's muſe could ſo richly ſupply, would have been at once a fine exordium, and at the ſame time a natural introduction to the truth he meant to impreſs. This, however, could hardly have been done without ſome little aid borrowed

* I ſhall inſert this, with ſome remarks upon it, in my additional notes to his Poems.

from

from ſatire: For however true his propoſition may be, that "all that men of power could do for men of genius is to leave them at their liberty;" or, as I ſhould put it, "that their beſt patronage ſignifies nothing if it abridges them of that liberty;" yet the fact is, that neither of the parties are convinced of this truth till they have tried the experiment, and find ſome reaſon or other (no matter whether good or bad) to think they had better never have tried it. Monſ. d'Alembert, who has written an excellent eſſay on this ſubject, which Mr. Gray greatly admired, and which perhaps gave him the firſt idea of this intended Ode, puts one of the more common of theſe reaſons in ſo lively a manner, that it may not be amiſs here to inſert it.

"Parmi les grands Seigneurs les plus affables
"il en eſt peu qui ſe depouillent avec des Gens
"de Lettres de leur grandeur, vraie ou pre-
"tendue, juſqu'au point de l'oublier tout-a-fait.
"C'eſt ce qu'on apperçoit ſur tout dans les
"converſations, où l'on n'eſt pas de leur avis.
"Il ſemble qu'a meſure que l'Homme d'Eſprit
"s'eclipſe, l'Homme de Qualité ſe montre; et
"paroiſſe exiger la deference dont l'Homme
"d'Eſprit avoit commencé par diſpenſer. Auſſi
"le commerce intime des Grands avec les Gens
"de Lettres ne finit que trop ſouvent par
"quelque rupture eclatante; rupture qui vient

" preſque toujours de l'oubli des regards reci-
" proques auxquelles on a manqué de part ou
" d'autre, peut etre même des deux côtés *".
However, I think a man of letters ought to have other reaſons beſides this for breaking ſuch a connection after it has been once formed.

I have now given the reader the beſt account in my power of what our Author's unfiniſhed lyrical ideas conſiſted: I believe they are all that he in any ſort committed to paper, and probably thoſe which he immediately alluded to in the preceding letter.

LETTER XXI.

Mr. GRAY to Mr. STONHEWER †.

Auguſt 21, 1755.

I Thank you for your intelligence about Herculaneum, which was the firſt news I received of it. I have ſince turned over Monſignor Baiardi's book ‡, where I have learned

* Eſſai ſur la Societe des Grands, avec les Gens de Lettres; " Melanges de Literature & Philoſophie," tom. 2d, p. 134.

† Now Auditor of Exciſe. His friendſhip with Mr. Gray commenced at College, and continued till the death of the latter.

‡ I believe the book here ridiculed was publiſhed by the authority of the King of Naples. But afterwards, on finding how ill qualified the Author was to execute the taſk, the buſineſs of deſcribing the Antiquities found at Herculaneum was put into other hands; who have certainly, as far as they have gone, performed it much better.

how

how many grains of modern wheat the Roman Congius, in the Capitol, holds, and how many thouſandth parts of an inch the Greek foot conſiſted of more (or leſs, for I forget which) than our own. He proves alſo by many affecting examples, that an antiquary may be miſtaken: That, for any thing any body knows, this place under ground might be ſome other place, and not Herculaneum; but nevertheleſs, that he can ſhew for certain, that it was this place and no other place; that it is hard to ſay which of the ſeveral Hercules's was the founder; therefore (in the third volume) he promiſes to give us the memoirs of them all; and after that, if we do not know what to think of the matter, he will tell us. There is a great deal of wit too, and ſatire and verſes, in the book, which is intended chiefly for the information of the French King, who will be greatly edified without doubt.

I am much obliged to you alſo for Voltaire's performance; it is very unequal, as he is apt to be in all but his dramas, and looks like the work of a man that will admire his retreat and his Leman-lake no longer than till he finds an opportunity to leave it *: However, though

* I do not recollect the title of this Poem, but it was a ſmall one which M. de Voltaire wrote when he firſt ſettled at Ferney. By the long reſidence he has ſince made there, it appears either that our author was miſtaken in his conjecture, or that an opportunity of leaving it had not yet happened.

there

there be many parts which I do not like, yet it is in ſeveral places excellent, and every where above mediocrity. As you have the politeneſs to pretend impatience, and deſire I would communicate, and all that, I annex a piece of the Prophecy §; which muſt be true at leaſt, as it was wrote ſo many hundred years after the events.

§ The ſecond Antiſtrophe and Epode, with a few lines of the third Strophe of his Ode, entitled the Bard, were here inſerted.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.